



**Submitted Date:** 9/30/2010 9:46:18 PM

**Easygrants ID:** 317

<b>Funding Opportunity:</b> Category Two	<b>Applicant Organization:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District
<b>Task:</b> Submit Application Non-EO	<b>Applicant Name:</b> Mr. Ernie Beck



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PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION	
<b>Name</b>	Mr. Ernie Beck,
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	Coarsegold Resource Conservation District
<b>Primary Address</b>	, , , , ,
<b>Primary Phone/Fax</b>	559-641-2381 Ext.
<b>Primary Email</b>	ernieb@sti.net



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PROJECT INFORMATION	
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<b>Project Title</b>	Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project
<b>Brief Description</b>	The goal of this planning project is to complete the planning and NEPA/CEQA analysis necessary to successfully repair several high-priority meadows within the 80,000 acre Willow Creek watershed. This will promote watershed health by improving water quality, quantity, and aquatic habitat of the Willow Creek watershed. The ultimate goal of this project is to partner with the USDA, Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District to repair high priority meadow systems and to collaborate with appropriate scientists, to educate and develop a model that displays the imperative functions that meadow systems play and how proper meadow function will be crucial to overall watershed health in the face of climate change. Stabilization and restoration of these meadow systems will improve or restore the hydrologic function creating a 'positive downstream effect' on the rivers, lakes and streams alike. The results of restoring these meadows will have a beneficial effect on water timing of the entire watershed
<b>Total Requested Amount</b>	60,764.45
<b>Other Fund Proposed</b>	24,601.80
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	85,366.25
<b>Project Category</b>	Pre-Project Due Diligence
<b>Project Area/Size</b>	0000
<b>Project Area Type</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Have you submitted to SNC this fiscal year?</b>	No
<b>Is this application related to other SNC funding?</b>	No



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<b>Project Results</b>
CEQA/NEPA Compliance

<b>Project Purpose</b>	<b>Project Purpose Percent</b>
Natural Resource	

<b>County</b>
Madera

<b>Sub Region</b>
South



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#### PROJECT OTHER CONTACTS INFORMATION

##### Other Grant Project Contacts

Name:	Mr. Eric Flemming,
Project Role:	County Administration
Phone:	0000000000
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	mc_planning@madera-county.org

Name:	District Irrigation Madera,
Project Role:	Water Agency 1 Contact
Phone:	5596733514
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	midhr@madera-id.org

Name:	District Water Chowchilla,
Project Role:	Water Agency 2
Phone:	5596653747
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	cwd@thegrid.net

Name:	Ms. Nancy Beavers-Treasure,
Project Role:	Day-to-Day Responsibility
Phone:	5598772973
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	beavers@netptc.net

Name:	Mr. Ernie Beck,
Project Role:	Authorized Representative
Phone:	5596412381
Phone Ext:	
E-mail:	ernieb@sti.net



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## PROJECT LOCATION INFORMATION

### Project Location

Address:	Not Submitted, , , North Fork, CA, 93643 United States
Water Agency:	Madera Irrigation District
Latitude:	37 25'30"
Longitude:	119 22'30"
Congressional District:	N/A
Senate:	N/A
Assembly:	N/A
Within City Limits:	No
City Name:	



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### PROJECT BUDGET INFORMATION

#### Direct

Description	Num of Units	Per Unit Cost	Total
Project Manager/writer	1	5,097.40	5,097.40
GIS Specialist	1	1,360.80	1,360.80
Hydrology crew	1	5,824.00	5,824.00
Botanist	1	2,671.90	2,671.90
Botany crew	1	5,824.00	5,824.00
Range	1	2,921.10	2,921.10
Archeologist	1	3,391.50	3,391.50
Archeology crew	1	5,824.00	5,824.00
Silviculture	1	2,041.20	2,041.20
Engineering	1	1,701.00	1,701.00
Soil	1	2,604.00	2,604.00
District Ranger	1	624.40	624.40
Wildlife Biologist	1	522.90	522.90



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# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

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Fisheries	1	745.50	745.50
Hydrology/IDT leader	1	3,475.50	3,475.50
Recreation	1	910.00	910.00
Coarsegold RCD staff mileage	1200	.50	600.00
Field trip (driver, fuel, insurance)	400	7.00	2,800.00
Coarsegold RCD part time staff	150	35.00	5,250.00
River Morphs Analysis Software	1	2,300.00	2,300.00
Educational outreach materials (prints, paper, cover boards, etc)	1	300.00	300.00

<b>Total Direct</b>	56,789.20
<b>Direct Detail</b>	Direct costs include costs for Staff/Personnel project related wages/benefits, travel and meeting expenses, contracts and consultants, and project related materials and supplies.

## Administrative



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Description	Num of Units	Per Unit Cost	Total
Coarsegold RCD administrative overhead	1	3,975.25	3,975.25

<b>Total Administrative</b>	3,975.25
<b>Administrative Detail</b>	

<b>Budget Grant Total:</b> 60,764.45
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### PROJECT OTHER SUPPORT INFORMATION

#### Other Support for the Sierra Nevada

Type :	Volunteer Hours
Estimated Amount:	993.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	24
Source:	BLRD Hydrologist/Project Manager
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged
Description:	3 days @ \$331.00/day
Type :	Volunteer Hours
Estimated Amount:	486.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	16
Source:	BLRD GIS Special
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged
Description:	2 days at \$243.00/day
Type :	Volunteer Hours
Estimated Amount:	446.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	8
Source:	BLRD District Ranger
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged
Description:	1 day @ \$446.00/day
Type :	Volunteer Hours
Estimated Amount:	300.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	8
Source:	Forester's Consulting
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged



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Description:	1 day at \$300/day
Type :	Major In-Kind Contr
Estimated Amount:	100.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	0
Source:	Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged
Description:	Internet, phone, print
Type :	Volunteer Hours
Estimated Amount:	19,516.80
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	0
Source:	BLRD staff overhead
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Application Submitted
Description:	n/a
Type :	Major In-Kind Contr
Estimated Amount:	2,000.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	0
Source:	BLRD vehicle use
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Application Submitted
Description:	4 vehicles at \$500/vehicle
Type :	Major In-Kind Contr
Estimated Amount:	750.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	0
Source:	BLRD materials needed (probes, waders, BMI
sample containers, etc)	
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Application Submitted

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Description:	n/a
Type :	Major In-Kind Contr
Estimated Amount:	10.00
Estimated Volunteer Hours:	0
Source:	BLRD Printing
Source Type:	Other
Status:	Pledged
Description:	N/A

<b>Estimated Total Amount of Resources Leveraged</b>	24,601.80
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## PROJECT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

### Regulatory Requirements

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### PROJECT TIMELINE INFORMATION

#### Project Timeline

Milestone/Activity: NEPA/CEQA field work and data gathering  
Description:  
Expected Date: 10/31/2011  
Deliverable: True

Milestone/Activity: NEPA/CEQA plan development  
Description:  
Expected Date: 12/30/2011  
Deliverable: True

Milestone/Activity: CEQA/NEPA analysis  
Description:  
Expected Date: 03/29/2013  
Deliverable: True

Milestone/Activity: Eight educational outreach presentation  
Description:  
Expected Date: 02/29/2012  
Deliverable: True

Milestone/Activity: Two youth oriented field trips  
Description:  
Expected Date: 03/30/2012  
Deliverable: True



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#### PROJECT PEER REVIEWER INFORMATION

##### Reviewers

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### UPLOADS

The following pages contain the following uploads provided by the applicant:

Upload Name
Completed Checklist
Table of Contents
Application Form
Project Summary
Evaluation Criteria Narrative
Performance Measures
Environmental Setting and Impacts
Photos of the Project Site
Detailed Budget Form
Project Location Map

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Authorization to Apply or Resolution
--------------------------------------

To preserve the integrity of the uploaded document, headers, footers and page numbers have not been added by the system.

Project Name: Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project

Applicant: Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

Date: September 13, 2010

1. ☒ Completed Checklist
2. ☒ Table of Contents
3. ☒ Application Form
4. ☒ Authorization to Apply or Resolution
- 5a. ☐ **N/A** Articles of Incorporation
- 5b. ☐ **N/A** Bylaws
- 5c. ☐ **N/A** Tax Exempt Status letter from the Internal Revenue Service
6. ☒ Project Summary
7. ☒ Evaluation Criteria Narrative
8. ☒ Detailed Budget Form
9. ☒ Performance Measures
10. ☒ Environmental Setting and Impacts
11. ☒ Project Location Map
12. ☐ **N/A** Parcel Map showing County Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
13. ☐ **N/A** Topographic Map
14. ☒ Photos of the Project Site
15. ☐ **N/A** Land Tenure
16. ☐ **N/A** Leases or Agreements
17. ☐ **N/A** California Environmental Quality Act
18. ☐ **N/A** National Environmental Policy Act
19. ☐ **N/A** Regulatory Requirements / Permits
20. ☒ Demonstrations of Support
21. ☐ **N/A** Executive Officer Authorization Request Form

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Item	Page
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Project Summary	5-6
Evaluation Criteria Narrative	7-19
A. Project Quality and Readiness	
a. Detailed Budget Report	
B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits	
C. SNC Program Goals	
D. Cooperation and Community Support	
E. Project Management	
Performance Measures	20
Environmental Setting and Impacts	20
Project Location Map	21
Photos of Project Site	22-23
Land Tenure	24
Leases or Agreements	24
California Environmental Quality Act	24
National Environmental Policy Act	24
Regulatory Requirements	24
Non-profit exempt	24
Executive Officer Authorization Request Form	24

### Attachments

- A. Resolution Authorizing Submission
- B. Demonstration of support - Letters of Support
  - Central Sierra Watershed Committee
  - Madera County Board of Supervisor
  - University of CA Cooperative Extension
  - Sierra Buisness Council
  - Sierra Resource Conservation District
  - Yosemite Unified School District
  - Sierra VISTA National Scenic Byway Association
  - Mariposa County Fires Safe Council
  - Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council
  - Chowchilla Red Top Resource Conservation District
  - Foundation of Resource Conservation
  - Southern Sierra Environmental Consulting
  - North Fork Community Development Council
  - Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council
  - United States Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District
- C. MOU between Bass Lake Ranger District and Coarsegold RCD

Project Name: Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project

Applicant: Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

Date: September 13, 2010

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13. ☐ **N/A** Topographic Map
14. ☒ Photos of the Project Site
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18. ☐ **N/A** National Environmental Policy Act
19. ☐ **N/A** Regulatory Requirements / Permits
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  - Sierra VISTA National Scenic Byway Association
  - Mariposa County Fires Safe Council
  - Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council
  - Chowchilla Red Top Resource Conservation District
  - Foundation of Resource Conservation
  - Southern Sierra Environmental Consulting
  - North Fork Community Development Council
  - Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council
  - United States Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District
- C. MOU between Bass Lake Ranger District and Coarsegold RCD

**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY  
PROPOSITION 84 GRANT APPLICATION FORM  
CATEGORY TWO GRANT**

Rev. January 2010

*Complete all applicable items on both pages of form.*

**1. PROJECT NAME**

Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project

**2. REFERENCE NUMBER**

**3. APPLICANT (Agency name, address, and zip code)**

Coarsegold Resource Conservation District  
P.O. Box 1288  
North Fork, CA 93643

**4. APPLICANT TYPE:**

☐ Non-profit Organization      ☒ Government  
☐ Tribal Organization

**5. APPLICANT'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

<i>Name and title – type or print</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ernie Beck, Vice President	(559) 641-2381	ernieb@sti.net

**6. PERSON WITH DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE GRANT**

<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Nancy Beavers - Treasurer	559-877-2973      beavers@netptc.net

**7. PERSON WITH FISCAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANT CONTRACT/INVOICING**

<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Nancy Beavers	559-877-2973      beavers@netptc.net

**8. FUNDING INFORMATION**

SNC Grant Request	\$60,764.45 SNC
(Up to \$250,000)	
Other Funds	\$24,601.80 In-kind
Total Project Cost	\$85,366.25 Total

**9. PROJECT CATEGORY**

☒ Pre-Project Planning

**9a. DELIVERABLES (Select one primary deliverable)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Study/Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Data
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraisal	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Condition Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> Model/Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Title Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Design/Permit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CEQA/NEPA Compliance	
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological/Other Survey(s)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I/II)	

**10. PROJECT ADDRESS/LOCATION (Include zip code)**

North Fork, CA 93643

**11. Latitude and Longitude**

Approximate center point: 37°25'30" (north lat), 119° 22' 30" (west long)



<b>12. COUNTY</b> Madera	<b>13. CITY</b> ( <i>Is project within city limits? If so, which one?</i> ) N/A
<b>14. NEAREST PUBLIC WATER AGENCY (OR AGENCIES) CONTACT INFORMATION:</b>	
<i>Name:</i> Madera Irrigation District <span style="float: right;"><i>Phone Number:</i> 559-673-3514</span> <i>Email address:</i> <a href="mailto:midhr@madera-id.org">midhr@madera-id.org</a>	
<i>Name:</i> Chowchilla Water District <span style="float: right;"><i>Phone Number:</i> 559-665-3747</span> <i>Email address:</i> <a href="mailto:cwd@thegrid.net">cwd@thegrid.net</a>	
<b>15. CEQA OR NEPA DOCUMENT TYPE</b> (if applicable) N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Exemption <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Finding of No Significant Impact</span> <input type="checkbox"/> Negative Declaration <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement</span> <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report <span style="float: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint CEQA/NEPA Document</span>	
<b>16. State Clearinghouse Number</b> N/A	
<b>17. Executive Officer Authorization</b> N/A Is an EO Authorization being requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

I certify that the information contained in the Application, including required attachments, is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed (*Authorized Representative*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title (*print or type*)

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Madera

**Applicant:** Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

**Project Title:** Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project

### PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this planning project is to complete the planning and NEPA/CEQA analysis necessary to successfully repair several high-priority meadows within the 80,000 acre Willow Creek watershed. This will promote watershed health by improving water quality, quantity, and aquatic habitat of the Willow Creek watershed. The ultimate goal of this project is to partner with the USDA, Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District to repair high priority meadow systems and to collaborate with appropriate scientists, to educate and develop a model that displays the imperative functions that meadow systems play and how proper meadow function will be crucial to overall watershed health in the face of climate change. Stabilization and restoration of these meadow systems will improve or restore the hydrologic function creating a 'positive downstream effect' on the rivers, lakes and streams alike. The results of restoring these meadows will have a beneficial effect on water timing of the entire watershed, allowing for more water availability in the late summer. Vegetation and fuels treatments will be integral part of each meadow restoration project, which will help to decrease the chance of wildfires within these areas. As part of the project, youth groups and community members will be educated in the importance of meadow restoration and invited to volunteer in the project implementation phase.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This planning grant will focus on developing a restoration plan (i.e., the 'proposed action') for the NEPA/CEQA analysis and obtaining the final NEPA/CEQA documents. This grant will allow the appropriate specialist to develop the proposed action and complete the NEPA/CEQA analysis for 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream. Within the Willow Creek watershed there are 42 high priority meadows that are home to endangered and Forest Service sensitive species and some rare mosses. The ability of these meadows to function properly is imperative to all downstream water users in that, quality, quantity, and timing are currently highly impacted and not properly controlled. This planning grant will obtain the NEPA/CEQA documents needed so that meadow restoration can occur. The USDA Forest Service, Sierra National Forest, Bass Lake Ranger District (here on noted as BLRD) has some implementation funding available and is currently working to obtain additional funds to allocate to the restoration of these meadows. It is the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District's (Coarsegold RCD) intension to actively engage a younger audience to learn about the best-practices of meadow restoration, the effect that meadow systems have on our watershed and the upcoming risk that are linked to climate change. To do so, the Coarsegold RCD will hire a part-time staff person to develop and present eight presentations throughout Madera County. To further support these efforts the staff person will also organize, plan, develop and execute two youth field trips.

Nature and Extent of Work: The work completed under this grant will consist of a 10-month planning process, which will lead to three-years of implementation/restoration projects. The planning process will include:

- GIS analysis and preparation of the project plan maps and graphics for the NEPA/CEQA analysis
- Hydrology surveys and the evaluation of project logistics
- Silvicultural, botanical and range surveys
- Archeology evaluation
- Recreation/Road engineering evaluation directly effecting meadows
- Assessment of fuels load and feasibility of possible prescribed fires
- The use of the above results to develop and produce a complete NEPA/CEQA analysis
- The development of eight educational presentation to a variety of target audiences, focusing on local youth
- The development, organization and execution of two youth field trips

The desired outcomes from this planning grant are to:

- Obtain the appropriate NEPA/CEQA documents needed for 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream, where in lies 42 high priority meadows

- Inform a younger audience of the critical role that meadows play within a watershed, and how climate change might affect these systems in the future

#### Role of Partners:

This planning project has been developed with the BLRD through a close collaboration with its resource specialist and managers. Through this key partnership, we have been able to identify 42 high priority meadows within the Willow Creek watershed that are in need of immediate restoration. Impaired meadows can have a detrimental effect on water timing and water quality, which in turn can affect critical aquatic habitat and downstream beneficial uses. The BLRD has existing funds and is obtaining additional funds to allocate to the restoration of these meadows but currently lacks planning funds. The level of NEPA/CEQA required, "Categorical Exclusion" (FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30, 36 CFR 222.6 (e)(7) ) does not entail scoping, public outreach or community education. Therefore the Coarsegold RCD is also applying for funding to effectively reach and educate the public, particularly youth, about the vital role of meadows and the real effects that climate change may have on them in years to come. This partnership will allow us to leverage our combined resources and accomplish more restoration targets in these high priority meadows and critical aquatic habitat throughout the watershed as well as to develop and implement the educational outreach component. Moreover, this partnership allows for the most cost effective NEPA/CEQA analysis to be conducted due to the appropriate staff currently in place. The involvement of the BLRD maximizes time efficiency by using resource specialists familiar with the meadows and the water improvement needs within them. Other key relationships, which are listed below, provide strong assets for the educational outreach component. Our diverse range of supporters can each outreach to the public, inviting them to attend and participate in the informational educational components that Coarsegold RCD will be delivering. Additionally some of these partnerships will help establish presentation components, provide unique insights and act as speakers at educational forums. It is the role of the BLRD to do all fieldwork, data gathering and plan development necessary to develop the proposed action and complete the appropriate level of NEPA/CEQA. The Coarsegold RCD role is to hire a part-time staff person to develop, organize and present eight educational presentations as well as organize, collaborate and execute two field trips. Coarsegold RCD intends to primarily target the youth of Madera County, including, Madera County High Schools, Community Development Councils, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, local non-profits and town hall meetings.

#### **Letters of Support**

Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council, North Fork Community Development Council, Southern Sierra Environmental Consulting, Foundation of Natural Resources, Chowchilla Red Top RCD, Eastern Madera Fire Safe Council, Mariposa Fire Safe Council, Sierra VISTA National Scenic Byway Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, Yosemite High School, U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Resource Conservation District, Sierra Business Council, Central Sierra Watershed Committee, Madera County Supervisor,

<b>SNC PROJECT DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
NEPA/CEQA field work and data gathering	6/2011 – 10/2011
NEPA/CEQA plan development	10/2011 – 12/2011
NEPA/CEQA analysis	1/2012 – 3/2012
Eight educational outreach presentations	7/2011 – 2/2012
Two youth oriented field trips	6/2011 – 3/2010

\*The BLRD will begin the implementation of these meadow restoration projects in the summer of 2012. The funding available for such restoration projects is coming from annual funds of the BLRD and PG&E monies. Currently the BLRD is applying for additional funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Additionally, Sierra Nevada Conservancy implementation dollars may be applied for in the future.

#### **SNC PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Proposed action and completion of NEPA/CEQA analysis	\$47,839.20
Educational outreach component (part-time staff, presentations & field trip)	\$8,950.00
Administration fee (6% of total project cost)	\$3,975.25
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60,764.45</b>

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

### A. Project Quality and Readiness

#### 1. General Description:

##### Purpose and goal

We are requesting a 10-month planning grant to develop the appropriate level of NEPA/CEQA for 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream within the Willow Creek watershed. The completion of NEPA/CEQA will allow for implementation projects on 42 meadows. Obtaining funds for the implementation process has already begun.

Meadow systems serve a vital role as water storage and release systems, which in turn have a great influence over water quality, aquatic habitat and beneficial uses downstream. The ultimate goal of this project is to partner with the USDA Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District (BLRD) to repair these meadow systems while collaborating with the appropriate scientist, youth groups and community members to develop a model and presentation that displays the imperative functions that meadow systems play in watersheds. The educational outreach component will be supported by the obtained Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person who will establish the youth-targeted presentations and field trips.

This project takes a systematic and holistic approach to watershed health by leveraging the work and funding available for such restoration projects (BLRD), engaging the youth to better comprehend the severity of meadow systems, the impact of climate change and collaborating with a diverse range of partners to assure the best resources are being obtained. This project contributes directly to the protection and restoration of watershed in the Sierra Nevada's as well as increasing public knowledge of climate change impacts and optimizing youth involvement.

Outcomes/deliverables: All outcomes below will be obtained through SNC funding and in-kind contributions

- Collection of field, survey and data work needed to obtain a purposed NEPA/CEQA action
- A complete proposal for NEPA/CEQA action
- The completion of NEPA/CEQA compliance on 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream
- Development of decision memo for outline of best-practice restoration methods
- The hiring of a part-time staff member
- Development of a youth oriented presentation
- Deliver 8 presentation to the public, primary youth oriented groups
- Organization and collaboration with youth groups for field trips
- The completion of two field trips, designated for youth
- Youth presentation availability on the Coarsegold RCD website
- Each partner and youth group involved will obtain a electronic copy of the presentation
- Increased youth understand of meadow systems, watersheds and climate change

Successful implementation of this planning grant will lead to the funding of a 3-year meadow restoration, implementation and evaluation program, which in turn, will lead to the improvement of hydrologic functions of streams and meadows, directly affecting the overall health of the Willow Creek watershed and its users.

##### Related activities:

Inspiration for this proposal began when Coarsegold RCD learned of potential funding available for high priority meadow restoration projects in the local watershed which could not be implemented because of the lack of categorical exclusion NEPA/CEQA completion. Because categorical exclusion at this level does not require or include a public outreach or scoping component Coarsegold RCD felt it necessary to also incorporate an educational component in this funding request so that the public at large, can learn of our ominous need of properly functioning meadows. With the completion of this planning project there will be 10-15 restoration sites that can

begin work immediately. BLRD will allocate future funds for the remaining restoration sites. Additionally, having the NEPA/CEQA complete for this area opens up further opportunities with the appropriate environmental assessments on the shelf, future projects will have the opportunity to move forward. Moreover, the potential for future Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) funding is increased as well as leverage for federal money such as California Green Sticker grant dollars to address level 2 road and OHV impacts to streams and meadows. It should be noted that this planning grant directly supports the Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative and Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, both of which Coarsegold RCD strongly support. Coarsegold RCD is also an active member of the Sustainable Forest and Community Collaborative group, initiated with Sierra Nevada Conservancy facilitation. It is our hope that projects that come from this group will also link with our planning project and the implementation that comes with it.

#### Related completed projects:

The BLRD has recently obtained the NEPA on a Chiquito Creek project. This project also focuses on watershed health with emphasis in meadow restoration. The planning document and outcome of this project provide 'starting point' information for this planning project. Having this information available may prove to be beneficial in different phases of the planning process.

#### Completed or in progress steps:

Currently, the high priority meadows have been identified (42) and their conditions have been documented. Additionally, a restoration design has been completed on four of the high priority meadows.

#### Method:

The methodology for obtaining NEPA/CEQA analysis is composed of a series of field work, data gathering and survey tasks, leading to a proposed action plan for NEPA/CEQA. Afterwards, a decision memo is developed and signed, completing the NEPA/CEQA analysis. Below are the types of data, field work and surveys needed and the significance of each. It should be noted that spending ample time in the field in the beginning, which is often overlooked, often supports more accurate information and specifies exact needs.

•**GIS analysis:** Preparation of project plan maps and graphics for the NEPA/CEQA analysis.

•**Hydrology surveys:** these surveys include reference reach data collection that allows the hydrology team to design the restoration structures so they conform to the natural channel conditions. Hydrology crews will also be evaluating the project logistics such as ingress routes for equipment and material into the meadows, cache locations for rock materials, other material needs (i.e., fencing, off site water infrastructure for livestock, etc.). This information will be necessary for range management evaluation, archeology assessment, and aquatics impacts.

•**Silvicultural survey:** prior to a vegetation treatment plan, the degree of encroachment in the meadows will be determined by review of aerial photographs and field surveys. Once the vegetation plan is complete, the terrestrial wildlife biologist will survey the selected meadows and identify tree habitat within the encroachment area to be left intact.

•**Botanical surveys:** a botany crew will evaluate the areas of sensitive plants for avoidance during restoration activities. Botany crews will also identify the location of native willow and sedge populations to be used in the re-vegetation of restoration areas and help develop the re-vegetation plan as well as identify any noxious/invasive weed populations that will need removal.

•**Range Surveys:** much of Forest Service land is permitted as range areas which negatively impacts meadows. A survey of the meadow with range specialist, hydrologist and permittee will evaluate livestock trailing issues and offsite water development feasibility. If applicable, develop plan to remove downed woody material or overgrown/encroached areas adjacent to the meadow to allow livestock ingress around as opposed to through the meadow and identify the area where livestock can congregate to drink away from the meadow.

•**Archeology:** restoration sites will be evaluated for survey need. At this stage this is a GIS exercise, but the sites requiring surveys will have to have them complete as part of the NEPA/CEQA phase.

•**Recreation/Road Engineering:** an evaluation of roads and OHV trails directly affecting the meadows will be conducted to determine what mitigation measures will have to be implemented as part of the restoration project.

•**Fuels:** an assessment of fuels loading and the feasibility of prescribed fire adjacent to the meadow will be conducted. If the action can qualify under a Categorical Exclusion (CE), then it will be integrated as part of the overall restoration plan.

Methodology for the environmental outreach component relies on the Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person and their collaboration with partners. This person will connect with all of our partners, as well as youth groups to see which areas the youth know the least about and the most effective way that they can be reached. Through communication, partnership and team work, the best targeted presentation accompanied by field trips, will be obtained.

## 2. Workplan and Schedule

The work completed under this planning will consist of a 10-month planning period and educational outreach process. The planning process will include:

- The collection of field work, data gathering and survey material to be analyzed for best management practice for restoration (BLRD)
- The completion of a NEPA/CEQA purposed action (BLRD)
- NEPA/CEQA analysis and memo decision (BLRD)
- Communication and identification of best youth groups to target (Coarsegold RCD)
- Obtain resources for the implementation of meadow restoration (BLRD)
- Education of youth groups on the direct and indirect benefits of meadow restoration and the potential risks associated with climate change (Coarsegold RCD)
- Obtain relationship and negotiation with supporters regarding their participation with educational outreach

<b>TASK</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>
Collection of survey information; GIS analysis, hydrology, silviculture, archeology, range, recreation/road, botany, fuel loads, aquatic habitat & water quantity/quality (BLRD)	1-4	Collection and synopsis of current conditions
The hiring of one part-time staff member (Coarsegold RCD)	1	Signed contract with consultant
Staff-person begins; connecting with partners & negotiating roles, developing presentation & outreach to youth groups	1-2	List of partners and contributions and presentations guidelines prepared
Presentation # 1 (Coarsegold RCD)	2-3	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 2 (Coarsegold RCD)	3-4	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 3 (Coarsegold RCD)	4-5	Education of youth/public
NEPA/CEQA plan development (BLRD)	5-7	Completed plan development for NEPA/CEQA
Presentation # 4 (Coarsegold RCD)	5-6	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 5 (Coarsegold RCD)	6-7	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 6 (Coarsegold RCD)	7-8	Education of youth/public
NEPA/CEQA analysis (BLRD)	8-10	Final NEPA/CEQA documents signed and completed
Presentation #7 (Coarsegold RCD)	8-9	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 8 (Coarsegold RCD)	9-10	Education of youth/public
Staff member passes on presentation material (Coarsegold RCD)	9-10	Electronic copies (printed if needed) will be distributed so that this information can continue to be useful and ongoing
Field trip preparation & execution (BLRD)	1-10	Effectively engage youth with a hands/eyes-on experience

Field trip preparation, collaboration, organization and execution will be occurring throughout the 10-month planning project. Correspondence depend highly on weather, conditions of restoration areas and youth group scheduling. Additionally, if youth groups have limited time frames, the staff member may have to execute more or less presentations each month. Either way, a minimum of eight presentations will occur. The Coarsegold RCD will report to the SNC at the 6 month mark and then again at the end of the project. Application for additional funds will continue by both parties throughout the planning project (month 1-10).

#### Factors affecting timing and schedule:

The most significant factors affecting the timing and success of this project are weather elements and stakeholder/partner participation. Firstly, because the designated sites are mostly above 6,000 feet, having an extended snow pack could cause physical restrictions. Secondly, school schedules and youth group availability will play a factor in determining the right location and date for presentation and field trips. The Coarsegold RCD staff person will work closely with BLRD, youth groups and partners to establish a time that works best and is most effective. Another unforeseen possibility that could affect scheduling is if there was a large nation-wide priority shift within the USDA, Forest Service. This is not expected and highly unlikely. Lastly, implementation funding requests will vary due to the deadlines outlines by potential funders, but continued research for such opportunities will continue throughout the planning project.

#### Implementation in a timely fashion:

Completion of NEPA/CEQA in this time frame is only possible due to the low compliance level required for such restoration projects. By partnering with the BLRD we are able to use their in-place staff who familiar with this watershed, which also saves time. By hiring a staff member to coordinate the effort, Coarsegold RCD will be able to thoroughly complete all organization, collaboration, development and planning needed to execute educational presentations and field trips. Funding a staff member guarantees this work to be completed, instead of relying on volunteers during this tight timeline.

### **3 .Budget**

SNC funding will provide for the project planning and the completion of NEPA/CEQA and allow for a congruent educational outreach component. Therefore, if the requested funding is obtained, it will be sufficient for the completion of this planning project. The majority of our projected funding is to obtain the appropriate specialist input needed to complete planning and NEPA/CEQA analysis. The BLRD day rate is much cheaper then obtaining a consulting group. Moreover, BLRD will cover (in-kind) all overhead included within that day rate, lowering the expense even more. Other expenditures include funding of a Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person (ten hours a month throughout the 10-month planning process), mileage for fieldtrips and additional supplies and materials needed to successfully complete the tangible items purposed.

#### In-kind support:

In-kind support has already been and will continue to be provided for additional BLRD expertise services. To date, the BLRD has donated the time of three staff members; Hydrologist/Project Manager, GIS specialist and the District Ranger and printing totaling \$1,935.00. Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D as donating approximately \$100.00 in office overhead for the completion of this grant application and a local Forester has donated time for project development totaling, \$300.00. The BLRD will contribute 30% of each specialist's 'day rate', representing departmental overhead as well as vehicle and material costs. In total, the BLRD will be donating \$22,266.80 throughout the 10-month planning project making the total in-kind contributions for this planning project \$24,601.80. Additionally, other partners will provide in-kind contributions through volunteered time, information and resources.

#### Cost-effectiveness of this project:

Due to the partnership with the BLRD the NEPA/CEQA analysis will be complete at a much cheaper rate then if the Coarsegold RCD were to hire contractors. The resources and technical experience of the BLRD staff is extremely beneficial and will maximize productivity. By using BLRD specialists familiar with these particular sites, time will be maximized, making this planning project more cost-effective. The specialists completing the field work, gathering

data and developing the restoration plan (i.e., the proposed action), will also be the same individuals conducting the NEPA/CEQA analysis. This will be the most time efficient and cost-effective approach to planning and NEPA/CEQA evaluation. Moreover, this will take full advantage of the local scientific expertise of the BLRD resource specialists that work on the forest and in the Willow Creek watershed.

Other funding related to this project:

After NEPA/CEQA is completed for the 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream restoration, the BLRD will be able to allocate implementation funds already in the pipeline. At this point in time the BLRD is committed to using approximately \$37,000 of their annual budget towards meadow restoration projects. Through an Army Corps of Engineers off-site wetland restoration requirement, Pacific Gas and Electric Company will fund the Forest Service approximately \$200,000 for meadow restoration in the Willow Creek watershed. Therefore approximately \$237,000.00 will be obtained for the restoration of these high priority meadows. BLRD is seeking other potential matching (non-state) funding sources for implementation including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Sierra Nevada Meadow Restoration grant for \$367,000, and the USFS Regional program funding (over a three year period) of approximately 120,000. Additional funding will be applied for if qualified opportunities arise within this project timeline.

Detailed Budget Form					
State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Willow Creek Restoration Planning Project					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b> pre project planning					
SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS	QTY	UNIT*	UNIT COST	SUBTOTAL	SNC Grant Request
<b>Staff/Personnel Expense - Project Related Wages/Benefits</b>					
GIS Specialist	8	day	\$243.00	\$1,944.00	\$1,360.80
Project manager/writer	22	day	\$331.00	\$7,282.00	\$5,097.40
Hydrology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Botanist	11	day	\$347.00	\$3,817.00	\$2,671.90
Botany crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Range	13	day	\$321.00	\$4,173.00	\$2,921.10
Archeologist	15	day	\$323.00	\$4,845.00	\$3,391.50
Archeology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Siviculture	12	day	\$243.00	\$2,916.00	\$2,041.20
Engineering	10	day	\$243.00	\$2,430.00	\$1,701.00
Soil	10	day	\$372.00	\$3,720.00	\$2,604.00
District Ranger	2	day	\$446.00	\$892.00	\$624.40
Wildlife Biologist	3	day	\$249.00	\$747.00	\$522.90
Fisheries	3	day	\$355.00	\$1,065.00	\$745.50
Hydrology/IDT leader	15	day	\$331.00	\$4,965.00	\$3,475.50
Recreation	5	day	\$260.00	\$1,300.00	\$910.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$65,056.00</b>	<b>\$45,539.20</b>
<b>Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related</b>					



Coarsegold RCD staff mileage	1200	mile	\$0.50	\$600.00	\$600.00
Field trips (driver, fuel, insurance etc)	400	mile	\$7.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,400.00</b>	<b>\$3,400.00</b>
<b>Contracts/Consultants - Project Related</b>					
Coarsegold RCD part time staff	150	hour	\$35.00	\$5,250.00	\$5,250.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$5,250.00</b>	<b>\$5,250.00</b>
<b>Materials/Supplies - Project Related</b>					
River Morphs Analysis Software				\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00
Educational outreach materials (prints, paper, cover boards, interactive worksheets)		Mis		\$300.00	\$300.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$2,600.00</b>	<b>\$2,600.00</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Fees - Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>SNC Grant Request</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense - Wages/Benefits/Consultants/Contract Labor					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Printed Materials - Project related Publications/Communications/Public Outreach					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Outreach/Education - Trainers fees/ facilitators/Facility Expense					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Equipment Use Expenses - Insurance/Registrations/Maintenance/Rental					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Performance Measure reporting					
	0		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>OTHER TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION THREE</b>					
<b>Administrative Costs (Description - Not to exceed 15% of Project Total):</b>					
Coarsegold RCD	7	percent	\$56,789.20	\$3,975.25	\$3,975.25
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,975.25</b>	<b>\$3,975.25</b>
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>					<b>\$60,764.45</b>

Project Budget Details					
State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b> Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b> Pre Project Planning					
<b>SECTION FOUR OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Status**</b>
List other funding or in-kind contributors to project					
BLRD Hydrologist/Project Manager	3	day	\$331.00	\$993.00	Obtained
BLRD GIS Special	2	day	\$243.00	\$486.00	Obtained
BLRD District Ranger	1	day	\$446.00	\$446.00	Obtained
BLRD printing	100	page	\$0.10	\$10.00	Obtained
Forester's Consulting	1	day	\$300.00	\$300.00	Obtained
Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D Resources (internet, phone, print)	0	mis	\$100.00	\$100.00	Obtained
BLRD staff overhead				\$19,516.80	if awarded
BLRD vehicle use	4	vehicle	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	if awarded
BLRD materials needed (probs,waders,BMI sample containers etc.)		mis		\$750.00	if awarded
Other partner billable hours unknown				\$0.00	if awarded
<b>Total Other Contributions:</b>				<b>\$24,601.80</b>	

#### 4. Status of agreements and land tenure

##### Agreements:

The scope of work of this project includes an important outreach component that will be headed by the Coarsegold RCD staff person, written into this project. The involvement of stakeholders and partners with planning, developing, evaluating and presenting will be highly beneficial. Organizations that have offered their support to this project have agreed to participate with the educational outreach component (refer to letters of support). This includes helping to distribute information, recruit participants, serve as presenters, and providing any informational material that will help to make the presentation as diverse, appealing and effective as possible. The NEPA/CEQA analysis will be conducted by the BLRD which has agreed to do so for the rate of \$47,839.20. This includes all the appropriate staff time, materials, vehicles and needed River Morphs Analysis software. The Coarsegold RCD has had a good standing relationship with the BLRD for many years and has had a MOU with this agency since 2002 (please see attachment). A specialized memorandum of agreement will be created upon the obtaining of this funding. These agreements can be found with the attached letters of support.

##### Land Tenure:

This project is a planning project that occurs strictly on U.S. Forest land. All NEPA/CEQA preparation and analysis will be conducted on Federal property, for which the USDA, Forest Service has tenure. This is further explained in

the attached letter of support from the BLRD.

## **B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits**

### 1. Contribution to Prop 84 and water:

This planning project directly and indirectly contributes to the restoration of the rivers, lakes and streams, the Willow Creek watershed and associated land, water and other natural resources through the region. The execution of this planning project indirectly leads to meadow restoration projects by unlocking funding currently in the pipeline. Once complete, the BLRD can immediately begin work to repair meadows with current funding, while in the process of obtaining additional funding. Therefore the funding of the planning project indirectly affects the overall health of the Willow Creek watershed, associated land, animals and additional resources that lies within, leading to direct benefits obtained through implementation of restoration projects throughout the Willow Creek watershed. These restoration projects will directly benefit watershed health, water quality and quantity in our critical aquatic refuges and municipal watersheds by restoring proper hydrologic function to streams and meadows. This contributes directly to the protection and restoration of watersheds in the Sierra Nevada and will address Proposition 84 and land and water benefits by:

- Improving or maintaining the water storage capability of meadows, which will maintain healthy riparian zones downstream. This will promote and maintain ground water banking on flood plains within and downstream of the meadow systems.
- Restoring and improving water availability will increase vegetative vigor and meadow vegetation cover, which will increase carbon sequestration.
- Stabilizing and restoring degraded meadows and stream channels will ensure the resiliency necessary to withstand the increases in flood frequency and intensity that will occur as a result of climate change.
- Improving water quality: by preventing the continued erosion of unstable meadows and stream channels, non-point source pollution of sediment will be reduced. Moreover, developing off-site water sources for livestock will greatly reduce the fecal coliform contamination of montane waters sources.
- Ensuring sustainable habitat for sensitive aquatic species such as mountain yellow legged frog and Yosemite toad.
- Adaptive management of meadow rangeland (i.e., working with the permittee to open ingress areas around meadows and developing off-site water) will mitigate livestock trailing problems in meadows and improve water quality.
- Holistic meadow and channel restoration will help ensure that the most scenic and beautiful parts of the Sierra National Forest remain so in perpetuity. This will ensure more enjoyment for the public and be important for the socioeconomic health of the area residents.
- Meadows act as short-term reservoirs and filters which enhances water quality downstream. Compromised hydrologic function in meadows causes an increase in the peak flow and a reduction of the residence time that water has in the meadow environment. This promotes erosion in and downstream of the meadow with a corresponding increase in sedimentation and turbidity. This in affects water quantity and water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen. Restoration of meadow and channel hydrologic function will promote healthier riparian systems, which in turn affect the land, streams, lakes and additional natural resources both at the meadows themselves and downstream users.

### Adverse effects:

This planning project that the Coarsegold RCD is proposing does not foresee potential for adverse effects. Future implementation of restoration projects by the BLRD may in fact, reverse a negative trend in watershed improvement acres, which could increase the Sierra National Forest priority standing for regional federal funding. With budget limitation, very little watershed improvement has occurred on the BLRD since the late 1980's. In fact, the BLRD's watershed budget has declined more than 75% in the last decade. With fewer restoration acres reported annually, less federal regional funding is allocated to the BLRD.

### Current threats that will be addressed:

Within the 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream there are critical aquatic and riparian habitat for the threatened and endangered species and Forest Service Sensitive species; Mountain Yellow-legged frog, Yosemite toad, Great Grey owl and some rare moss species (*Meesia triquetra* and *Messia uliginosa*). Additionally grazing on these meadows directly impacts the meadows capability to store water. Without recognizing this issue, cows will continue to cut holes in the sod which in turn decrease water quality and quantity. Therefore it is the best interest of the watershed to repair and communicate with land owner in order to keep cows out of these high-priority areas.

Lastly, Mule Deer Mitigation is currently being sacrificed due to the present conditions. Mule deer utilize diverse habitats throughout California. One of the more important habitats to mule deer for foraging and reproduction is in and around meadows. Restoring hydrological function improves this habitat for deer by returning the meadow and associated plants to desired conditions for foraging, resting and cover. Restoring and improving meadow habitat provides suitable mitigation for migratory corridors and fawning/foraging habitat. The goal of the off-site mitigation measures for Mule Deer are to enhance currently suitable meadow habitat by improving the hydrologic regime and function within the meadow. This can be done by actively repairing headcuts and other erosional features, as well as by removing encroaching conifers whose presence may contribute to lowering the groundwater table within the meadow. Headcuts can lead to down-cutting of productive soil and dewatering of the meadow, eliminating important forage and browse for mule deer.

#### Performance measures associated:

Because most of the above threats will be primed for better condition at a later date (not associated with this planning project) measures for the success of the restoration within the 10-month planning project is not foreseen. However, in addition to the four required performance measures we have chosen two additional measures that will effectively measure the success of this planning project. They are, the number of organizations included in collaborative planning process and the number of collaboratively developed plans.

#### 2. Sustainability:

Planned evaluations of the meadow restoration projects will provide long term sustainability by implementing annual repair and planting programs for the first five years after construction. Restoration areas will be enclosed and protected from any livestock impact with repair and maintenance of the enclosures occurring annually. Therefore it can be said, that restoration of these high priority systems will in turn help to sustain appropriate health conditions of the watershed as a whole, making recreational uses more enjoyable and maximizing biodiversity.

#### 3. Climate change impacts

Climate change and shifting demographics influence the landscape and the social and economic systems of California and the Sierra Nevada. Climate change impacts are already evident, as seen in declining snowpacks, changes in runoff timing and intensity, increasing fire frequency and severity, increasing drought frequency and severity, and rising temperatures.

Although no site-specific climate change studies have been conducted on the Sierra National Forest, some climate models have been run in the central Sierra on the Merced River above Happy Isles Bridge at the head of Yosemite Valley (Dettinger, et al., 2004). The climate was simulated using the coupled global atmosphere-ocean-ice-land Parallel Climate Model (PCM), which showed stationary climate and hydrologic variations until the 1970s when temperatures begin to warm noticeably. The model predicted that a majority of Sierra Nevada precipitation would fall as rain rather than snow, and would produce earlier snowmelt and earlier stream peak flows (Dettinger, et al., 2004). Dettinger (et al., 2004) outlines import considerations and challenges facing land and resource managers in the Sierra Nevada.

Within a watershed meadows act as a key component, storing water for lengths of time and filtering any unnecessary sediment. If warming temperatures result in less precipitation falling as snow, smaller snowpacks, earlier snowmelt, increased incidence of rain-on-snow flooding, reduced dry-season stream flows, greater moisture stress on vegetation, and increased stress on aquatic ecosystems then the meadows will need to be able to hold much larger amounts of water in the future than they are currently able. These already degraded meadow systems will collapse and no longer serve their imperative function, resulting in, increased potential for flooding of lakes and streams, increased sediment build-up resulting in mucky water, and a variety of other negative effects for habitats

and ecosystems alike.

Even the modest climate changes projected by the PCM (with a conservative value for warming and small precipitation changes) would probably be enough to change the rivers, landscape, and ecology of the Sierra Nevada, yielding: (1) substantial changes in extreme temperature episodes, for example, fewer frosts and more heat waves; (2) substantial reductions in spring snowpack (unless large increases in precipitation are experienced), earlier snowmelt, and more runoff in winter with less in spring and summer; (3) more winter flooding; and (4) drier summer soils (and vegetation) with more opportunities for wildfire.

*References: Dettinger, Michael D., Cayan, Daniel R., Knowles, Noah, Westerling, Anthony, and Tyree, Mary K., 2004. Recent Projections of 21st-Century Climate Change and Watershed Responses in the Sierra Nevada, USDA Forest Service, General Technical Report, Pacific Southwest Research Station, PSW-GTR-193.*

### **C. SNC Program Goals**

There are currently two goals that are strongly supported through this planning project; reduced risk of wildfire and the improvement of water and air quality. Improving the hydrologic function of meadows and streams in headwater municipal watersheds of the Sierra National Forest is essential for improved water quality and quantity downstream in the central valley and decreases fuels within these high-priority areas. The completion of this planning phase opens up tremendous opportunity for the following direct benefits listed below.

#### Protect and improve water and air quality

- Improved water quality: by preventing the continued erosion of unstable meadows and stream channels, non-point source pollution of sediment will be reduced. Moreover, developing off-site water sources for livestock will greatly reduce the fecal coliform contamination of montane waters sources.
- Improve or maintain the water storage capability of meadows, which will maintain healthy riparian zones downstream. This will promote and maintain ground water banking on flood plains within and downstream of the meadow systems.
- Restoration and improved water availability will increase vegetative vigor and meadow vegetation cover, which will increase carbon sequestration.
- Stabilization and restoration of degraded meadows and stream channels will ensure the resiliency necessary to withstand the increases in flood frequency and intensity that will occur as a result of climate change.
- Adaptive management of meadow rangeland (i.e., working with the permittee to open ingress areas around meadows and developing off-site water) will mitigate livestock trailing problems in meadows and improve water quality.
- Holistic meadow and channel restoration will help ensure that the most scenic and beautiful parts of the Sierra National Forest remain so in perpetuity. This will ensure more enjoyment for the public recreation and be important for the socioeconomic health of the area residents.

#### Reduced the risk of natural disaster:

- Vegetation treatments and prescribed fire will reduce the fuels loading around meadows and also make more water available for storage in meadow systems by removing encroaching conifers (e.g., lodgepole pine). This is especially important in dry years where water availability is limited.
- By restoring the hydrologic function of meadows (i.e., elevating the groundwater table), the encroachment of lodge pole pine into meadows can be mitigated, thereby lessening the fuels load in these areas.

#### Performance measures associated with the above goals

Within in the 10-month time period of this planning grant the direct restoration benefits will not be measured or obtained. However, the amount of surveys completed and plans developed will potential measure the benefits to come.

## **D. Cooperation and Community Support**

1. Traditionally the Coarsegold RCD has always worked collaboratively with other agencies and groups. The letters of support attached have expressed not only the excitement about the completion of this planning project but also a commitment to deliver resources for the educational outreach component of this planning grant. This partnership will help assure that the best up-to-date material is presented in an effective manner. Some major supporters are: Madera County Board of Supervisors, Yosemite High School, Sierra Resource Conservation District and the Central Sierra Watershed Committee. Please look at the attachments to view all of the supporters.

Additionally it should be noted that the Coarsegold RCD is a strong supporter of the Sierra Nevada Initiative and the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative. We believe that this planning project coincides with the goal and mission of these documents. The Coarsegold RCD is also an active member of the Sustainable Forest and Community Collaborative based out of Madera and Mariposa Counties. As supporters and participants we try to develop our projects in such a way that they support all of the group's collaborative efforts.

2. All watershed users will benefit from this planning grant. Watersheds work much like a "snow-ball" effect. Therefore, a 'positive downstream effect' will start at the top with meadow restoration, and move downward directly and indirectly affecting all components within the watershed and the communities that surround it. Healthy meadows and streams benefit residents, promote more recreational opportunities for visitors and increases the enjoyment that the public receives from our National Forests

3. (a) This planning project encompasses a unique partnership between the BLRD and the Coarsegold RCD. The two have had an active Memorandum of Understanding for 9 years and have worked together on several projects during this time. If awarded, a memorandum of agreement will be developed specifying responsibilities and commitments in regards to this particular project. The core relationship in this planning grant is between the BLRD and the Coarsegold RCD however, other partners and supporters will also serve as resources as needed.

3. (b) If awarded the newly hired Coarsegold RCD staff member will promote collaboration with all Coarsegold RCD supporters and partners, tapping into resources that will enhance the impact of the educational outreach component. Methods used to solicit participation will be the forms of email, phone, letters, etc., Special emphasis will be placed on targeting youth groups due to the increased scheduling requirements. The staff-person will establish and maintain working relationships between Coarsegold RCD and the appropriate schools, scouts and clubs. It should be noted that Yosemite High School has submitted a written form of support and other schools within the district have had a positive response when contacted.

4. At this point in time, the Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Project has been highly supported and there is no known opposition to be noted. There is another group within the Sierra National Forest currently applying for funds to conduct a broad scale study focusing on meadow conditions and the causes for tree encroachment within those meadows. This project will complement the proposed work that but it should be noted that the two projects are different in area and deliverables.

5. Currently this planning project is compatible with four plans:

### **A) United States Forest Service General Plan**

Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Sierra National Forest, Soil and Water Standard and Guide 122: "Improve water quality and protect soil productivity by restoring deteriorated watersheds on the basis of economic efficiency and severity of problem and its impact on downstream beneficial uses.", Soil and Water (4.5.2.11) p. 4-20

### **B) Madera County Local hazard Mitigation Plan**

Section 7.1 Mitigation Goals, Table 7-1. Goal # 2&3

Specifically, these goals discuss reducing the possibility of floods, wildfire and dam failure.

**C) Madera County General Plan**

Agriculture and Natural Resources, Wetland and Riparian areas, Goal 5.D.5. & 5.D.7.

Specifically, these goals discuss identifying and conserving habitats and wildlife species associated with riparian areas and supporting management for groundwater recharge, nutrient catchment and wildlife habitats.

**D) Madera County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan**

Chapter 9, Watershed Management

Specifically, this chapter discusses multiple methods of effective water management that encompass several areas that this planning project pertains to.

6. This planning project will not only have long term on-going media opportunities as restoration occurs but during the 10-month planning period there are additional opportunities in regard to educational outreach. As applicable milestones are reached the media will become aware of the positive educational model created. Having local youth in the field, learning directly about watershed issues, meadow restoration significance and climate change effects will attract media attention. Additionally, the triangular relationship between the BLRD, Coarsegold RCD and SNC will attract clout and hopefully more media, elected/agency official and the public's attention resulting in further educational outreach of all its listeners, readers and viewers alike. The Coarsegold RCD will develop press releases as seen fit and will invite the media on the field trips.

**E. Project Management**

The Coarsegold RCD has been in existence since 1966. The District covers 534,380 acres in eastern Madera County, serving the communities of Bass Lake, Coarsegold, Oakhurst, O'Neals and North Fork and includes a portion of Yosemite National Park. A Volunteer Board meets monthly to provide effective project oversight and management. The Coarsegold RCD has an experienced volunteer treasurer/bookkeeper who effectively utilizes professional financial systems. Additionally the requested funding includes resources to pay for additional costs to assure the effective administration of this grant. Some grants obtained and administered by the Coarsegold RCD include:

- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$18,400.00  
Comparison of Brush Maintenance Alternatives  
Study of Fuel break methods, Example: goats, chemicals, mechanical, etc.
- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$25,256.00  
Conservation Occupations & Resource Education (CORE)  
(Work Program for local youth) Fuel and watershed work
- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$12,080.00, total cost of project \$27,630.00  
Noxious weed control in Eastern Madera County land owner/mapping project
- Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Project/Proposition 204 \$300,000.00  
State Water Resource control Board/Madera County Environmental Health  
Brushed, chipped, burned over 800 acres of private land, public land, etc to expand existing fuel breaks

The District has MOUs with a number of agencies that allow it to engage in effective, collaborative action.

(See [www.crcd.org](http://www.crcd.org).) Partners include:

The US Forest Service	Chowchilla Red Top RCD
The Bureau of Land Management	Department of Fish and Game
CA Dept. of Conservation	National Wild Turkey Federation
CA State USDA	Natural Resources Conservation Services

Current and past projects include:

- Demonstration of Rangeland Vegetated Buffers for Reducing NPS Pathogens, Nutrients, and Organic Carbon into the Tributaries of the Fresno and San Joaquin Rivers
- Numerous Fuel Break projects

- Kinsman Flat Habitat Improvement
- Willow Creek Community Fuel Reduction project
- Ahwahnee Fire Station Landscape Demonstration Project
- Outdoor classroom project on Fresno River (with BLM)
- Youth Workshops
- Community Fire Workshops
- Living among the Oaks Workshops

Additionally, our partnership with BLRD leverages our capacity on many levels. Having the appropriate scientist, potential federal funds and opportunity for other technical advice needed will enhance our success. The U.S. Forest Service has collectively more watershed analysis and restoration experience than any other federal or private entity. Moreover, the Forest Service does more NEPA planning than any other federal agency (47% nationally). As such, the Forest Service has the expertise, organizational capacity and resources to efficiently gather, manage, and analyze watershed data and complete the associated environmental planning. The Sierra National Forest has a diverse staff of resource scientists including hydrologists, soil scientists, geologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists, botanists, archeologists, engineers, and NEPA planners to draw upon to complete both the technical and planning related work.



## 8. Detailed Budget Form

This is including within the evaluation criteria as required.

## 9. Performance Measures

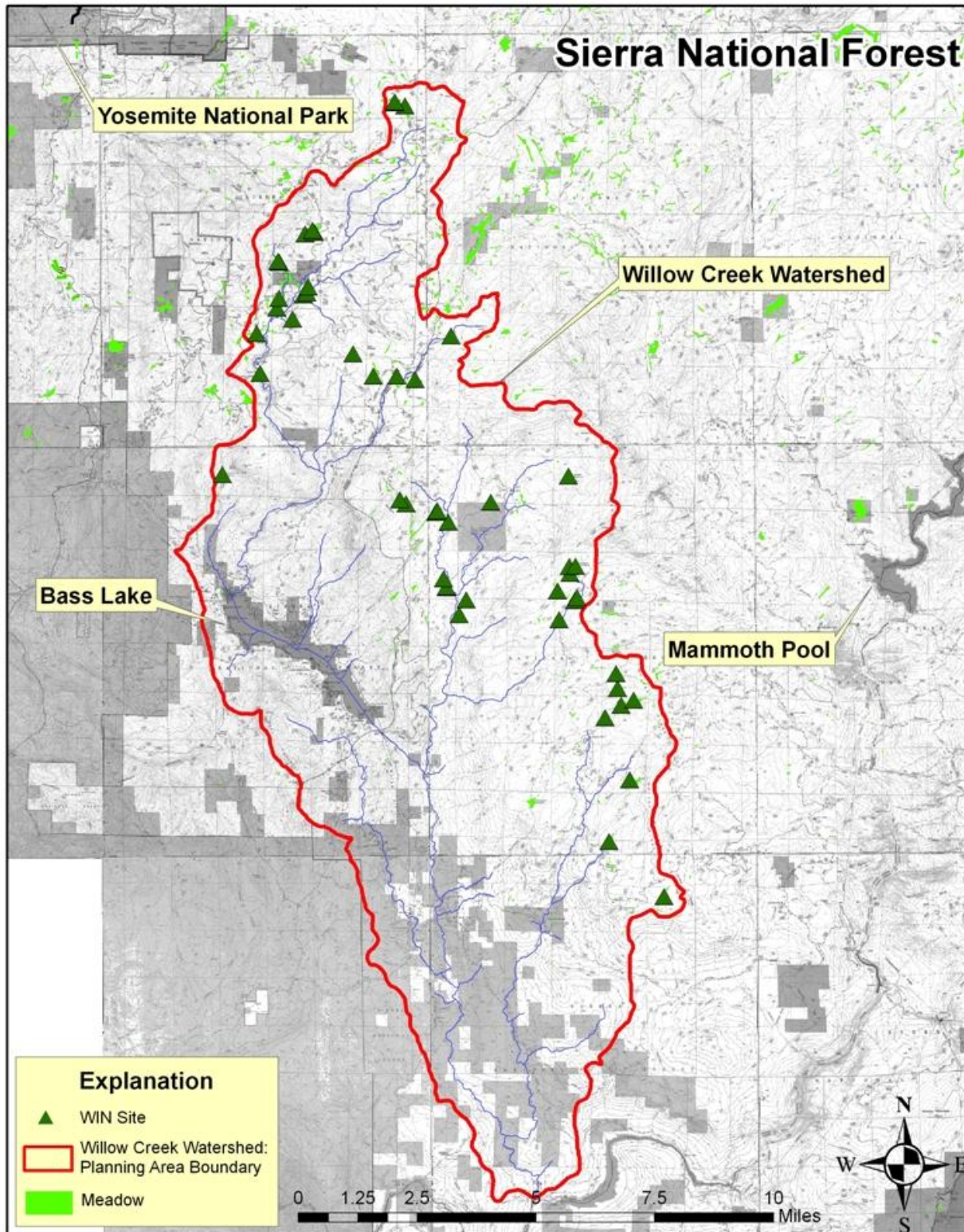
In addition to the four required performance measures (if applicable) the Coarsegold RCD has established 2 other measures that help demonstrate the success of this planning grant. They are, the number of collaboratively developed plans and the number of organizations included in collaborative planning process.

Performance Measure – Proposed Planning Project	Data Collection Method and Sources	Target Values
Number of people reached	Outreach materials, presentation role call sheets	200
Dollar value of resources leveraged	Budget	N/A implementation funding total
New jobs created	Project report	1
New, improved or preserved economic activities	N/A this stage	0
Number of collaboratively developed plans	Completion of reports and analysis	2
Number of organizations included in collaborative planning process	Staff member to keep ongoing list of partner contributions and group involvement	10

## 10. Environmental Setting and Impacts:

The meadow restoration project areas occur throughout the Willow Creek watershed, located in the north-central part of the Sierra National Forest, just south of Yosemite National Park. Current land uses include varied recreational activities, fuels management projects, commercial hazard tree removal, livestock grazing, and watershed restoration projects. The watershed is home to several Forest Service sensitive and threatened and endangered species including Mountain Yellow Legged Frog, Yosemite toad, goshawks, spotted owls, Great Gray owls and the Pacific Fisher. Restoration projects concentrate on meadow and fen environments and will address a variety of systems components that will restore or enhance the ground water availability and storage capacity in meadow systems. Improved water storage capacity and availability will promote more robust and vigorous riparian-wetland vegetation development, which will make these systems both more physically resilient to floods and increase carbon sequestration. Climate change will likely bring about increased flood stressors as a result of more precipitation falling as rain and an increased frequency of rain-on-snow flooding. Restoration and physical repair and/or stabilization of meadows and stream channels will be essential to allow these systems to withstand and adapt to changes in the hydrologic regimes as a result of climate change. Cultural resources have been or will be evaluated through the National Environmental Policy Act analysis conducted by the U.S. Forest Service.

## 11. Project Location Map



**12. Parcel Map with County Assessor's Parcel Number (s) noted:**

N/A. due to the fact that all land within this planning grant is federal land owned by the SNF.

**13. Topographic Map:**

The above project map is a topographic map. After speaking with SNC staff it was noted that a topographic map was not needed for all 42 sites. If any detail on any particular meadow sites is needed, we would be more than happy to obtain and submit them as seen fit.



#### 14. Photos of the Project Site:







**15. Land Tenure:** N/A. All data gathering, field work and subsequent restoration would only occur on Federal property, for which the USDA Forest Service has tenure.

**16. Leases or Agreements:** N/A. The proposed activity is a planning project. No leases or formal agreements are required to initiate or implement the planning process.

**17. California environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** N/A. This planning project will be delivering both the NEPA/CEQA analysis.

**18. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance:** N/A. This planning project will be delivering both the NEPA/CEQA analysis therefore there is no compliance to begin this planning project.

**19. Regulatory Requirements/Permits:** N/A. the proposed activity is a planning project. No permits are required to initiate or implement the planning process.

**20. Non-profit exempt**

Coarsegold Resource Conservation District is a state agency. Therefore, articles of incorporation, bylaws and the tax exempt status letter are not required for this application.

**21. Demonstration of Support:** Please look at the attached letters of support (15)

**22. Executive Office Authorization Request Form:** N/A. This planning project does not qualify for this type of authorization.



## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Madera

**Applicant:** Coarsegold Resource Conservation District

**Project Title:** Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project

### PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this planning project is to complete the planning and NEPA/CEQA analysis necessary to successfully repair several high-priority meadows within the 80,000 acre Willow Creek watershed. This will promote watershed health by improving water quality, quantity, and aquatic habitat of the Willow Creek watershed. The ultimate goal of this project is to partner with the USDA, Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District to repair high priority meadow systems and to collaborate with appropriate scientists, to educate and develop a model that displays the imperative functions that meadow systems play and how proper meadow function will be crucial to overall watershed health in the face of climate change. Stabilization and restoration of these meadow systems will improve or restore the hydrologic function creating a 'positive downstream effect' on the rivers, lakes and streams alike. The results of restoring these meadows will have a beneficial effect on water timing of the entire watershed, allowing for more water availability in the late summer. Vegetation and fuels treatments will be integral part of each meadow restoration project, which will help to decrease the chance of wildfires within these areas. As part of the project, youth groups and community members will be educated in the importance of meadow restoration and invited to volunteer in the project implementation phase.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This planning grant will focus on developing a restoration plan (i.e., the 'proposed action') for the NEPA/CEQA analysis and obtaining the final NEPA/CEQA documents. This grant will allow the appropriate specialist to develop the proposed action and complete the NEPA/CEQA analysis for 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream. Within the Willow Creek watershed there are 42 high priority meadows that are home to endangered and Forest Service sensitive species and some rare mosses. The ability of these meadows to function properly is imperative to all downstream water users in that, quality, quantity, and timing are currently highly impacted and not properly controlled. This planning grant will obtain the NEPA/CEQA documents needed so that meadow restoration can occur. The USDA Forest Service, Sierra National Forest, Bass Lake Ranger District (here on noted as BLRD) has some implementation funding available and is currently working to obtain additional funds to allocate to the restoration of these meadows. It is the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District's (Coarsegold RCD) intension to actively engage a younger audience to learn about the best-practices of meadow restoration, the effect that meadow systems have on our watershed and the upcoming risk that are linked to climate change. To do so, the Coarsegold RCD will hire a part-time staff person to develop and present eight presentations throughout Madera County. To further support these efforts the staff person will also organize, plan, develop and execute two youth field trips.

Nature and Extent of Work: The work completed under this grant will consist of a 10-month planning process, which will lead to three-years of implementation/restoration projects. The planning process will include:

- GIS analysis and preparation of the project plan maps and graphics for the NEPA/CEQA analysis
- Hydrology surveys and the evaluation of project logistics
- Silvicultural, botanical and range surveys
- Archeology evaluation
- Recreation/Road engineering evaluation directly effecting meadows
- Assessment of fuels load and feasibility of possible prescribed fires
- The use of the above results to develop and produce a complete NEPA/CEQA analysis
- The development of eight educational presentation to a variety of target audiences, focusing on local youth
- The development, organization and execution of two youth field trips

The desired outcomes from this planning grant are to:

- Obtain the appropriate NEPA/CEQA documents needed for 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream, where in lies 42 high priority meadows
- Inform a younger audience of the critical role that meadows play within a watershed, and how climate change might affect these systems in the future

### Role of Partners:

This planning project has been developed with the BLRD through a close collaboration with its resource specialist and managers. Through this key partnership, we have been able to identify 42 high priority meadows within the Willow Creek watershed that are in need of immediate restoration. Impaired meadows can have a detrimental effect on water timing and water quality, which in turn can affect critical aquatic habitat and downstream beneficial uses. The BLRD has existing funds and is obtaining additional funds to allocate to the restoration of these meadows but currently lacks planning funds. The level of NEPA/CEQA required, "Categorical Exclusion" (FSH 1909.15 Chapter 30, 36 CFR 222.6 (e)(7) ) does not entail scoping, public outreach or community education. Therefore the Coarsegold RCD is also applying for funding to effectively reach and educate the public, particularly youth, about the vital role of meadows and the real effects that climate change may have on them in years to come. This partnership will allow us to leverage our combined resources and accomplish more restoration targets in these high priority meadows and critical aquatic habitat throughout the watershed as well as to develop and implement the educational outreach component. Moreover, this partnership allows for the most cost effective NEPA/CEQA analysis to be conducted due to the appropriate staff currently in place. The involvement of the BLRD maximizes time efficiency by using resource specialists familiar with the meadows and the water improvement needs within them. Other key relationships, which are listed below, provide strong assets for the educational outreach component. Our diverse range of supporters can each outreach to the public, inviting them to attend and participate in the informational educational components that Coarsegold RCD will be delivering. Additionally some of these partnerships will help establish presentation components, provide unique insights and act as speakers at educational forums. It is the role of the BLRD to do all fieldwork, data gathering and plan development necessary to develop the proposed action and complete the appropriate level of NEPA/CEQA. The Coarsegold RCD role is to hire a part-time staff person to develop, organize and present eight educational presentations as well as organize, collaborate and execute two field trips. Coarsegold RCD intends to primarily target the youth of Madera County, including, Madera County High Schools, Community Development Councils, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, local non-profits and town hall meetings.

### **Letters of Support**

Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council, North Fork Community Development Council, Southern Sierra Environmental Consulting, Foundation of Natural Resources, Chowchilla Red Top RCD, Eastern Madera Fire Safe Council, Mariposa Fire Safe Council, Sierra VISTA National Scenic Byway Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, Yosemite High School, U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Resource Conservation District, Sierra Business Council, Central Sierra Watershed Committee, Madera County Supervisor,

<b>SNC PROJECT DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
NEPA/CEQA field work and data gathering	6/2011 – 10/2011
NEPA/CEQA plan development	10/2011 – 12/2011
NEPA/CEQA analysis	1/2012 – 3/2012
Eight educational outreach presentations	7/2011 – 2/2012
Two youth oriented field trips	6/2011 – 3/2010

\*The BLRD will begin the implementation of these meadow restoration projects in the summer of 2012. The funding available for such restoration projects is coming from annual funds of the BLRD and PG&E monies. Currently the BLRD is applying for additional funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Additionally, Sierra Nevada Conservancy implementation dollars may be applied for in the future.

### **SNC PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Proposed action and completion of NEPA/CEQA analysis	\$47,839.20
Educational outreach component (part-time staff, presentations & field trip)	\$8,950.00
Administration fee (6% of total project cost)	\$3,975.25
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60,764.45</b>



## EVALUATION CRITERIA

### A. Project Quality and Readiness

#### 1. General Description:

##### Purpose and goal

We are requesting a 10-month planning grant to develop the appropriate level of NEPA/CEQA for 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream within the Willow Creek watershed. The completion of NEPA/CEQA will allow for implementation projects on 42 meadows. Obtaining funds for the implementation process has already begun.

Meadow systems serve a vital role as water storage and release systems, which in turn have a great influence over water quality, aquatic habitat and beneficial uses downstream. The ultimate goal of this project is to partner with the USDA Forest Service, Bass Lake Ranger District (BLRD) to repair these meadow systems while collaborating with the appropriate scientist, youth groups and community members to develop a model and presentation that displays the imperative functions that meadow systems play in watersheds. The educational outreach component will be supported by the obtained Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person who will establish the youth-targeted presentations and field trips.

This project takes a systematic and holistic approach to watershed health by leveraging the work and funding available for such restoration projects (BLRD), engaging the youth to better comprehend the severity of meadow systems, the impact of climate change and collaborating with a diverse range of partners to assure the best resources are being obtained. This project contributes directly to the protection and restoration of watershed in the Sierra Nevada's as well as increasing public knowledge of climate change impacts and optimizing youth involvement.

Outcomes/deliverables: All outcomes below will be obtained through SNC funding and in-kind contributions

- Collection of field, survey and data work needed to obtain a purposed NEPA/CEQA action
- A complete proposal for NEPA/CEQA action
- The completion of NEPA/CEQA compliance on 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream
- Development of decision memo for outline of best-practice restoration methods
- The hiring of a part-time staff member
- Development of a youth oriented presentation
- Deliver 8 presentation to the public, primary youth oriented groups
- Organization and collaboration with youth groups for field trips
- The completion of two field trips, designated for youth
- Youth presentation availability on the Coarsegold RCD website
- Each partner and youth group involved will obtain a electronic copy of the presentation
- Increased youth understand of meadow systems, watersheds and climate change

Successful implementation of this planning grant will lead to the funding of a 3-year meadow restoration, implementation and evaluation program, which in turn, will lead to the improvement of hydrologic functions of streams and meadows, directly affecting the overall health of the Willow Creek watershed and its users.

##### Related activities:

Inspiration for this proposal began when Coarsegold RCD learned of potential funding available for high priority meadow restoration projects in the local watershed which could not be implemented because of the lack of categorical exclusion NEPA/CEQA completion. Because categorical exclusion at this level does not require or include a public outreach or scoping component Coarsegold RCD felt it necessary to also incorporate an educational component in this funding request so that the public at large, can learn of our ominous need of properly functioning meadows. With the completion of this planning project there will be 10-15 restoration sites that can begin work immediately. BLRD will allocate future funds for the remaining restoration sites. Additionally, having the NEPA/CEQA complete for this area opens up further opportunities with the appropriate environmental assessments

on the shelf, future projects will have the opportunity to move forward. Moreover, the potential for future Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) funding is increased as well as leverage for federal money such as California Green Sticker grant dollars to address level 2 road and OHV impacts to streams and meadows. It should be noted that this planning grant directly supports the Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative and Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, both of which Coarsegold RCD strongly support. Coarsegold RCD is also an active member of the Sustainable Forest and Community Collaborative group, initiated with Sierra Nevada Conservancy facilitation. It is our hope that projects that come from this group will also link with our planning project and the implementation that comes with it.

#### Related completed projects:

The BLRD has recently obtained the NEPA on a Chiquito Creek project. This project also focuses on watershed health with emphasis in meadow restoration. The planning document and outcome of this project provide 'starting point' information for this planning project. Having this information available may prove to be beneficial in different phases of the planning process.

#### Completed or in progress steps:

Currently, the high priority meadows have been identified (42) and their conditions have been documented. Additionally, a restoration design has been completed on four of the high priority meadows.

#### Method:

The methodology for obtaining NEPA/CEQA analysis is composed of a series of field work, data gathering and survey tasks, leading to a proposed action plan for NEPA/CEQA. Afterwards, a decision memo is developed and signed, completing the NEPA/CEQA analysis. Below are the types of data, field work and surveys needed and the significance of each. It should be noted that spending ample time in the field in the beginning, which is often overlooked, often supports more accurate information and specifies exact needs.

•**GIS analysis:** Preparation of project plan maps and graphics for the NEPA/CEQA analysis.

•**Hydrology surveys:** these surveys include reference reach data collection that allows the hydrology team to design the restoration structures so they conform to the natural channel conditions. Hydrology crews will also be evaluating the project logistics such as ingress routes for equipment and material into the meadows, cache locations for rock materials, other material needs (i.e., fencing, off site water infrastructure for livestock, etc.). This information will be necessary for range management evaluation, archeology assessment, and aquatics impacts.

•**Silvicultural survey:** prior to a vegetation treatment plan, the degree of encroachment in the meadows will be determined by review of aerial photographs and field surveys. Once the vegetation plan is complete, the terrestrial wildlife biologist will survey the selected meadows and identify tree habitat within the encroachment area to be left intact.

•**Botanical surveys:** a botany crew will evaluate the areas of sensitive plants for avoidance during restoration activities. Botany crews will also identify the location of native willow and sedge populations to be used in the re-vegetation of restoration areas and help develop the re-vegetation plan as well as identify any noxious/invasive weed populations that will need removal.

•**Range Surveys:** much of Forest Service land is permitted as range areas which negatively impacts meadows. A survey of the meadow with range specialist, hydrologist and permittee will evaluate livestock trailing issues and offsite water development feasibility. If applicable, develop plan to remove downed woody material or overgrown/encroached areas adjacent to the meadow to allow livestock ingress around as opposed to through the meadow and identify the area where livestock can congregate to drink away from the meadow.

•**Archeology:** restoration sites will be evaluated for survey need. At this stage this is a GIS exercise, but the sites requiring surveys will have to have them complete as part of the NEPA/CEQA phase.

•**Recreation/Road Engineering:** an evaluation of roads and OHV trails directly affecting the meadows will be conducted to determine what mitigation measures will have to be implemented as part of the restoration project.

•**Fuels:** an assessment of fuels loading and the feasibility of prescribed fire adjacent to the meadow will be conducted. If the action can qualify under a Categorical Exclusion (CE), then it will be integrated as part of the overall restoration plan.

Methodology for the environmental outreach component relies on the Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person and their collaboration with partners. This person will connect with all of our partners, as well as youth groups to see which areas the youth know the least about and the most effective way that they can be reached. Through communication, partnership and team work, the best targeted presentation accompanied by field trips, will be obtained.

## 2. Workplan and Schedule

The work completed under this planning will consist of a 10-month planning period and educational outreach process. The planning process will include:

- The collection of field work, data gathering and survey material to be analyzed for best management practice for restoration (BLRD)
- The completion of a NEPA/CEQA purposed action (BLRD)
- NEPA/CEQA analysis and memo decision (BLRD)
- Communication and identification of best youth groups to target (Coarsegold RCD)
- Obtain resources for the implementation of meadow restoration (BLRD)
- Education of youth groups on the direct and indirect benefits of meadow restoration and the potential risks associated with climate change (Coarsegold RCD)
- Obtain relationship and negotiation with supporters regarding their participation with educational outreach

Field trip preparation, collaboration, organization and execution will be occurring throughout the 10-month planning project. Correspondence depend highly on weather, conditions of restoration areas and youth group scheduling.

<b>TASK</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>DELIVERABLE</b>
Collection of survey information; GIS analysis, hydrology, silviculture, archeology, range, recreation/road, botany, fuel loads, aquatic habitat & water quantity/quality (BLRD)	1-4	Collection and synopsis of current conditions
The hiring of one part-time staff member (Coarsegold RCD)	1	Signed contract with consultant
Staff-person begins; connecting with partners & negotiating roles, developing presentation & outreach to youth groups	1-2	List of partners and contributions and presentations guidelines prepared
Presentation # 1 (Coarsegold RCD)	2-3	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 2 (Coarsegold RCD)	3-4	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 3 (Coarsegold RCD)	4-5	Education of youth/public
NEPA/CEQA plan development (BLRD)	5-7	Completed plan development for NEPA/CEQA
Presentation # 4 (Coarsegold RCD)	5-6	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 5 (Coarsegold RCD)	6-7	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 6 (Coarsegold RCD)	7-8	Education of youth/public
NEPA/CEQA analysis (BLRD)	8-10	Final NEPA/CEQA documents signed and completed
Presentation #7 (Coarsegold RCD)	8-9	Education of youth/public
Presentation # 8 (Coarsegold RCD)	9-10	Education of youth/public
Staff member passes on presentation material (Coarsegold RCD)	9-10	Electronic copies (printed if needed) will be distributed so that this information can continue to be useful and ongoing
Field trip preparation & execution (BLRD)	1-10	Effectively engage youth with a hands/eyes-on experience

Additionally, if youth groups have limited time frames, the staff member may have to execute more or less presentations each month. Either way, a minimum of eight presentations will occur. The Coarsegold RCD will report to the SNC at the 6 month mark and then again at the end of the project. Application for additional funds will continue by both parties throughout the planning project (month 1-10).

Factors affecting timing and schedule:

The most significant factors affecting the timing and success of this project are weather elements and stakeholder/partner participation. Firstly, because the designated sites are mostly above 6,000 feet, having an extended snow pack could cause physical restrictions. Secondly, school schedules and youth group availability will play a factor in determining the right location and date for presentation and field trips. The Coarsegold RCD staff person will work closely with BLRD, youth groups and partners to establish a time that works best and is most effective. Another unforeseen possibility that could affect scheduling is if there was a large nation-wide priority shift within the USDA, Forest Service. This is not expected and highly unlikely. Lastly, implementation funding requests will vary due to the deadlines outlines by potential funders, but continued research for such opportunities will continue throughout the planning project.

Implementation in a timely fashion:

Completion of NEPA/CEQA in this time frame is only possible due to the low compliance level required for such restoration projects. By partnering with the BLRD we are able to use their in-place staff who familiar with this watershed, which also saves time. By hiring a staff member to coordinate the effort, Coarsegold RCD will be able to thoroughly complete all organization, collaboration, development and planning needed to execute educational presentations and field trips. Funding a staff member guarantees this work to be completed, instead of relying on volunteers during this tight timeline.

### **3 .Budget**

SNC funding will provide for the project planning and the completion of NEPA/CEQA and allow for a congruent educational outreach component. Therefore, if the requested funding is obtained, it will be sufficient for the completion of this planning project. The majority of our projected funding is to obtain the appropriate specialist input needed to complete planning and NEPA/CEQA analysis. The BLRD day rate is much cheaper then obtaining a consulting group. Moreover, BLRD will cover (in-kind) all overhead included within that day rate, lowering the expense even more. Other expenditures include funding of a Coarsegold RCD part-time staff person (ten hours a month throughout the 10-month planning process), mileage for fieldtrips and additional supplies and materials needed to successfully complete the tangible items purposed.

In-kind support:

In-kind support has already been and will continue to be provided for additional BLRD expertise services. To date, the BLRD has donated the time of three staff members; Hydrologist/Project Manager, GIS specialist and the District Ranger and printing totaling \$1,935.00. Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D as donating approximately \$100.00 in office overhead for the completion of this grant application and a local Forester has donated time for project development totaling, \$300.00. The BLRD will contribute 30% of each specialist's 'day rate', representing departmental overhead as well as vehicle and material costs. In total, the BLRD will be donating \$22,266.80 throughout the 10-month planning project making the total in-kind contributions for this planning project \$24,601.80. Additionally, other partners will provide in-kind contributions through volunteered time, information and resources.

Cost-effectiveness of this project:

Due to the partnership with the BLRD the NEPA/CEQA analysis will be complete at a much cheaper rate then if the Coarsegold RCD were to hire contractors. The resources and technical experience of the BLRD staff is extremely beneficial and will maximize productivity. By using BLRD specialists familiar with these particular sites, time will be maximized, making this planning project more cost-effective. The specialists completing the field work, gathering data and developing the restoration plan (i.e., the proposed action), will also be the same individuals conducting the NEPA/CEQA analysis. This will be the most time efficient and cost-effective approach to planning and NEPA/CEQA

evaluation. Moreover, this will take full advantage of the local scientific expertise of the BLRD resource specialists that work on the forest and in the Willow Creek watershed.

Other funding related to this project:

After NEPA/CEQA is completed for the 290 acres of meadow and 10 miles of stream restoration, the BLRD will be able to allocate implementation funds already in the pipeline. At this point in time the BLRD is committed to using approximately \$37,000 of their annual budget towards meadow restoration projects. Through an Army Corps of Engineers off-site wetland restoration requirement, Pacific Gas and Electric Company will fund the Forest Service approximately \$200,000 for meadow restoration in the Willow Creek watershed. Therefore approximately \$237,000.00 will be obtained for the restoration of these high priority meadows. BLRD is seeking other potential matching (non-state) funding sources for implementation including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Sierra Nevada Meadow Restoration grant for \$367,000, and the USFS Regional program funding (over a three year period) of approximately 120,000. Additional funding will be applied for if qualified opportunities arise within this project timeline.

<b>Detailed Budget Form</b>					
<b>State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy</b>					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Willow Creek Restoration Planning Project					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b> pre project planning					
<b>SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>SNC Grant Request</b>
<b>Staff/Personnel Expense - Project Related Wages/Benefits</b>					
GIS Specialist	8	day	\$243.00	\$1,944.00	\$1,360.80
Project manager/writer	22	day	\$331.00	\$7,282.00	\$5,097.40
Hydrology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Botanist	11	day	\$347.00	\$3,817.00	\$2,671.90
Botany crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Range	13	day	\$321.00	\$4,173.00	\$2,921.10
Archeologist	15	day	\$323.00	\$4,845.00	\$3,391.50
Archeology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Siviculture	12	day	\$243.00	\$2,916.00	\$2,041.20
Engineering	10	day	\$243.00	\$2,430.00	\$1,701.00
Soil	10	day	\$372.00	\$3,720.00	\$2,604.00
District Ranger	2	day	\$446.00	\$892.00	\$624.40
Wildlife Biologist	3	day	\$249.00	\$747.00	\$522.90
Fisheries	3	day	\$355.00	\$1,065.00	\$745.50
Hydrology/IDT leader	15	day	\$331.00	\$4,965.00	\$3,475.50
Recreation	5	day	\$260.00	\$1,300.00	\$910.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$65,056.00</b>	<b>\$45,539.20</b>
<b>Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related</b>					
Coarsegold RCD staff mileage	1200	mile	\$0.50	\$600.00	\$600.00

Field trips (driver, fuel, insurance etc)	400	mile	\$7.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,400.00</b>	<b>\$3,400.00</b>
<b>Contracts/Consultants - Project Related</b>					
Coarsegold RCD part time staff	150	hour	\$35.00	\$5,250.00	\$5,250.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$5,250.00</b>	<b>\$5,250.00</b>
<b>Materials/Supplies - Project Related</b>					
River Morphs Analysis Software				\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00
Educational outreach materials (prints, paper, cover boards, interactive worksheets)		Mis		\$300.00	\$300.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$2,600.00</b>	<b>\$2,600.00</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Fees - Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>SNC Grant Request</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense - Wages/Benefits/Consultants/Contract Labor					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Printed Materials - Project related Publications/Communications/Public Outreach					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Outreach/Education - Trainers fees/ facilitators/Facility Expense					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Equipment Use Expenses - Insurance/Registrations/Maintenance/Rental					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Performance Measure reporting					
	0		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>OTHER TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION THREE</b>					
<b>Administrative Costs (Description - Not to exceed 15% of Project Total):</b>					
Coarsegold RCD	7	percent	\$56,789.20	\$3,975.25	\$3,975.25
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,975.25</b>	<b>\$3,975.25</b>
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>					<b>\$60,764.45</b>
<b>Project Budget Details</b>					

State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b> Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b> Pre Project Planning					
SECTION FOUR OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS	QTY	UNIT*	UNIT COST	Contribution	Status**
List other funding or in-kind contributors to project					
BLRD Hydrologist/Project Manager	3	day	\$331.00	\$993.00	Obtained
BLRD GIS Special	2	day	\$243.00	\$486.00	Obtained
BLRD District Ranger	1	day	\$446.00	\$446.00	Obtained
BLRD printing	100	page	\$0.10	\$10.00	Obtained
Forester's Consulting	1	day	\$300.00	\$300.00	Obtained
Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D Resources (internet, phone, print)	0	mis	\$100.00	\$100.00	Obtained
BLRD staff overhead				\$19,516.80	if awarded
BLRD vehicle use	4	vehicle	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	if awarded
BLRD materials needed (probs,waders,BMI sample containers etc.)		mis		\$750.00	if awarded
Other partner billable hours unknown				\$0.00	if awarded
<b>Total Other Contributions:</b>				<b>\$24,601.80</b>	

#### **4. Status of agreements and land tenure**

##### **Agreements:**

The scope of work of this project includes an important outreach component that will be headed by the Coarsegold RCD staff person, written into this project. The involvement of stakeholders and partners with planning, developing, evaluating and presenting will be highly beneficial. Organizations that have offered their support to this project have agreed to participate with the educational outreach component (refer to letters of support). This includes helping to distribute information, recruit participants, serve as presenters, and providing any informational material that will help to make the presentation as diverse, appealing and effective as possible. The NEPA/CEQA analysis will be conducted by the BLRD which has agreed to do so for the rate of \$47,839.20. This includes all the appropriate staff time, materials, vehicles and needed River Morphs Analysis software. The Coarsegold RCD has had a good standing relationship with the BLRD for many years and has had a MOU with this agency since 2002 (please see attachment). A specialized memorandum of agreement will be created upon the obtaining of this funding. These agreements can be found with the attached letters of support.

##### **Land Tenure:**

This project is a planning project that occurs strictly on U.S. Forest land. All NEPA/CEQA preparation and analysis will be conducted on Federal property, for which the USDA, Forest Service has tenure. This is further explained in the attached letter of support from the BLRD.

## **B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits**

### 1. Contribution to Prop 84 and water:

This planning project directly and indirectly contributes to the restoration of the rivers, lakes and streams, the Willow Creek watershed and associated land, water and other natural resources through the region. The execution of this planning project indirectly leads to meadow restoration projects by unlocking funding currently in the pipeline. Once complete, the BLRD can immediately begin work to repair meadows with current funding, while in the process of obtaining additional funding. Therefore the funding of the planning project indirectly affects the overall health of the Willow Creek watershed, associated land, animals and additional resources that lies within, leading to direct benefits obtained through implementation of restoration projects throughout the Willow Creek watershed. These restoration projects will directly benefit watershed health, water quality and quantity in our critical aquatic refuges and municipal watersheds by restoring proper hydrologic function to streams and meadows. This contributes directly to the protection and restoration of watersheds in the Sierra Nevada and will address Proposition 84 and land and water benefits by:

- Improving or maintaining the water storage capability of meadows, which will maintain healthy riparian zones downstream. This will promote and maintain ground water banking on flood plains within and downstream of the meadow systems.
- Restoring and improving water availability will increase vegetative vigor and meadow vegetation cover, which will increase carbon sequestration.
- Stabilizing and restoring degraded meadows and stream channels will ensure the resiliency necessary to withstand the increases in flood frequency and intensity that will occur as a result of climate change.
- Improving water quality: by preventing the continued erosion of unstable meadows and stream channels, non-point source pollution of sediment will be reduced. Moreover, developing off-site water sources for livestock will greatly reduce the fecal coliform contamination of montane waters sources.
- Ensuring sustainable habitat for sensitive aquatic species such as mountain yellow legged frog and Yosemite toad.
- Adaptive management of meadow rangeland (i.e., working with the permittee to open ingress areas around meadows and developing off-site water) will mitigate livestock trailing problems in meadows and improve water quality.
- Holistic meadow and channel restoration will help ensure that the most scenic and beautiful parts of the Sierra National Forest remain so in perpetuity. This will ensure more enjoyment for the public and be important for the socioeconomic health of the area residents.
- Meadows act as short-term reservoirs and filters which enhances water quality downstream. Compromised hydrologic function in meadows causes an increase in the peak flow and a reduction of the residence time that water has in the meadow environment. This promotes erosion in and downstream of the meadow with a corresponding increase in sedimentation and turbidity. This in affects water quantity and water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen. Restoration of meadow and channel hydrologic function will promote healthier riparian systems, which in turn affect the land, streams, lakes and additional natural resources both at the meadows themselves and downstream users.

### Adverse effects:

This planning project that the Coarsegold RCD is proposing does not foresee potential for adverse effects. Future implementation of restoration projects by the BLRD may in fact, reverse a negative trend in watershed improvement acres, which could increase the Sierra National Forest priority standing for regional federal funding. With budget limitation, very little watershed improvement has occurred on the BLRD since the late 1980's. In fact, the BLRD's watershed budget has declined more than 75% in the last decade. With fewer restoration acres reported annually, less federal regional funding is allocated to the BLRD.

### Current threats that will be addressed:



Within the 290 acres of meadows and 10 miles of stream there are critical aquatic and riparian habitat for the threatened and endangered species and Forest Service Sensitive species; Mountain Yellow-legged frog, Yosemite toad, Great Grey owl and some rare moss species (*Meesia triquetra* and *Messia uliginosa*). Additionally grazing on these meadows directly impacts the meadows capability to store water. Without recognizing this issue, cows will continue to cut holes in the sod which in turn decrease water quality and quantity. Therefore it is the best interest of the watershed to repair and communicate with land owner in order to keep cows out of these high-priority areas.

Lastly, Mule Deer Mitigation is currently being sacrificed due to the present conditions. Mule deer utilize diverse habitats throughout California. One of the more important habitats to mule deer for foraging and reproduction is in and around meadows. Restoring hydrological function improves this habitat for deer by returning the meadow and associated plants to desired conditions for foraging, resting and cover. Restoring and improving meadow habitat provides suitable mitigation for migratory corridors and fawning/foraging habitat. The goal of the off-site mitigation measures for Mule Deer are to enhance currently suitable meadow habitat by improving the hydrologic regime and function within the meadow. This can be done by actively repairing headcuts and other erosional features, as well as by removing encroaching conifers whose presence may contribute to lowering the groundwater table within the meadow. Headcuts can lead to down-cutting of productive soil and dewatering of the meadow, eliminating important forage and browse for mule deer.

#### Performance measures associated:

Because most of the above threats will be primed for better condition at a later date (not associated with this planning project) measures for the success of the restoration within the 10-month planning project is not foreseen. However, in addition to the four required performance measures we have chosen two additional measures that will effectively measure the success of this planning project. They are, the number of organizations included in collaborative planning process and the number of collaboratively developed plans.

#### 2. Sustainability:

Planned evaluations of the meadow restoration projects will provide long term sustainability by implementing annual repair and planting programs for the first five years after construction. Restoration areas will be enclosed and protected from any livestock impact with repair and maintenance of the enclosures occurring annually. Therefore it can be said, that restoration of these high priority systems will in turn help to sustain appropriate health conditions of the watershed as a whole, making recreational uses more enjoyable and maximizing biodiversity.

#### 3. Climate change impacts

Climate change and shifting demographics influence the landscape and the social and economic systems of California and the Sierra Nevada. Climate change impacts are already evident, as seen in declining snowpacks, changes in runoff timing and intensity, increasing fire frequency and severity, increasing drought frequency and severity, and rising temperatures.

Although no site-specific climate change studies have been conducted on the Sierra National Forest, some climate models have been run in the central Sierra on the Merced River above Happy Isles Bridge at the head of Yosemite Valley (Dettinger, et al., 2004). The climate was simulated using the coupled global atmosphere-ocean-ice-land Parallel Climate Model (PCM), which showed stationary climate and hydrologic variations until the 1970s when temperatures begin to warm noticeably. The model predicted that a majority of Sierra Nevada precipitation would fall as rain rather than snow, and would produce earlier snowmelt and earlier stream peak flows (Dettinger, et al., 2004). Dettinger (et al., 2004) outlines import considerations and challenges facing land and resource managers in the Sierra Nevada.

Within a watershed meadows act as a key component, storing water for lengths of time and filtering any unnecessary sediment. If warming temperatures result in less precipitation falling as snow, smaller snowpacks, earlier snowmelt, increased incidence of rain-on-snow flooding, reduced dry-season stream flows, greater moisture stress on vegetation, and increased stress on aquatic ecosystems then the meadows will need to be able to hold much larger amounts of water in the future than they are currently able. These already degraded meadow systems will collapse and no longer serve their imperative function, resulting in, increased potential for flooding of lakes and streams, increased sediment build-up resulting in mucky water, and a variety of other negative effects for habitats

and ecosystems alike.

Even the modest climate changes projected by the PCM (with a conservative value for warming and small precipitation changes) would probably be enough to change the rivers, landscape, and ecology of the Sierra Nevada, yielding: (1) substantial changes in extreme temperature episodes, for example, fewer frosts and more heat waves; (2) substantial reductions in spring snowpack (unless large increases in precipitation are experienced), earlier snowmelt, and more runoff in winter with less in spring and summer; (3) more winter flooding; and (4) drier summer soils (and vegetation) with more opportunities for wildfire.

*References: Dettinger, Michael D., Cayan, Daniel R., Knowles, Noah, Westerling, Anthony, and Tyree, Mary K., 2004. Recent Projections of 21st-Century Climate Change and Watershed Responses in the Sierra Nevada, USDA Forest Service, General Technical Report, Pacific Southwest Research Station, PSW-GTR-193.*

### **C. SNC Program Goals**

There are currently two goals that are strongly supported through this planning project; reduced risk of wildfire and the improvement of water and air quality. Improving the hydrologic function of meadows and streams in headwater municipal watersheds of the Sierra National Forest is essential for improved water quality and quantity downstream in the central valley and decreases fuels within these high-priority areas. The completion of this planning phase opens up tremendous opportunity for the following direct benefits listed below.

#### Protect and improve water and air quality

- Improved water quality: by preventing the continued erosion of unstable meadows and stream channels, non-point source pollution of sediment will be reduced. Moreover, developing off-site water sources for livestock will greatly reduce the fecal coliform contamination of montane waters sources.
- Improve or maintain the water storage capability of meadows, which will maintain healthy riparian zones downstream. This will promote and maintain ground water banking on flood plains within and downstream of the meadow systems.
- Restoration and improved water availability will increase vegetative vigor and meadow vegetation cover, which will increase carbon sequestration.
- Stabilization and restoration of degraded meadows and stream channels will ensure the resiliency necessary to withstand the increases in flood frequency and intensity that will occur as a result of climate change.
- Adaptive management of meadow rangeland (i.e., working with the permittee to open ingress areas around meadows and developing off-site water) will mitigate livestock trailing problems in meadows and improve water quality.
- Holistic meadow and channel restoration will help ensure that the most scenic and beautiful parts of the Sierra National Forest remain so in perpetuity. This will ensure more enjoyment for the public recreation and be important for the socioeconomic health of the area residents.

#### Reduced the risk of natural disaster:

- Vegetation treatments and prescribed fire will reduce the fuels loading around meadows and also make more water available for storage in meadow systems by removing encroaching conifers (e.g., lodgepole pine). This is especially important in dry years where water availability is limited.
- By restoring the hydrologic function of meadows (i.e., elevating the groundwater table), the encroachment of lodge pole pine into meadows can be mitigated, thereby lessening the fuels load in these areas.

#### Performance measures associated with the above goals

Within in the 10-month time period of this planning grant the direct restoration benefits will not be measured or obtained. However, the amount of surveys completed and plans developed will potential measure the benefits to come.

## **D. Cooperation and Community Support**

1. Traditionally the Coarsegold RCD has always worked collaboratively with other agencies and groups. The letters of support attached have expressed not only the excitement about the completion of this planning project but also a commitment to deliver resources for the educational outreach component of this planning grant. This partnership will help assure that the best up-to-date material is presented in an effective manner. Some major supporters are: Madera County Board of Supervisors, Yosemite High School, Sierra Resource Conservation District and the Central Sierra Watershed Committee. Please look at the attachments to view all of the supporters.

Additionally it should be noted that the Coarsegold RCD is a strong supporter of the Sierra Nevada Initiative and the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative. We believe that this planning project coincides with the goal and mission of these documents. The Coarsegold RCD is also an active member of the Sustainable Forest and Community Collaborative based out of Madera and Mariposa Counties. As supporters and participants we try to develop our projects in such a way that they support all of the group's collaborative efforts.

2. All watershed users will benefit from this planning grant. Watersheds work much like a "snow-ball" effect. Therefore, a 'positive downstream effect' will start at the top with meadow restoration, and move downward directly and indirectly affecting all components within the watershed and the communities that surround it. Healthy meadows and streams benefit residents, promote more recreational opportunities for visitors and increases the enjoyment that the public receives from our National Forests

3. (a) This planning project encompasses a unique partnership between the BLRD and the Coarsegold RCD. The two have had an active Memorandum of Understanding for 9 years and have worked together on several projects during this time. If awarded, a memorandum of agreement will be developed specifying responsibilities and commitments in regards to this particular project. The core relationship in this planning grant is between the BLRD and the Coarsegold RCD however, other partners and supporters will also serve as resources as needed.

3. (b) If awarded the newly hired Coarsegold RCD staff member will promote collaboration with all Coarsegold RCD supporters and partners, tapping into resources that will enhance the impact of the educational outreach component. Methods used to solicit participation will be the forms of email, phone, letters, etc., Special emphasis will be placed on targeting youth groups due to the increased scheduling requirements. The staff-person will establish and maintain working relationships between Coarsegold RCD and the appropriate schools, scouts and clubs. It should be noted that Yosemite High School has submitted a written form of support and other schools within the district have had a positive response when contacted.

4. At this point in time, the Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Project has been highly supported and there is no known opposition to be noted. There is another group within the Sierra National Forest currently applying for funds to conduct a broad scale study focusing on meadow conditions and the causes for tree encroachment within those meadows. This project will complement the proposed work that but it should be noted that the two projects are different in area and deliverables.

5. Currently this planning project is compatible with four plans:

### **A) United States Forest Service General Plan**

Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Sierra National Forest, Soil and Water Standard and Guide 122: "Improve water quality and protect soil productivity by restoring deteriorated watersheds on the basis of economic efficiency and severity of problem and its impact on downstream beneficial uses.", Soil and Water (4.5.2.11) p. 4-20

### **B) Madera County Local hazard Mitigation Plan**

Section 7.1 Mitigation Goals, Table 7-1. Goal # 2&3

Specifically, these goals discuss reducing the possibility of floods, wildfire and dam failure.

### **C) Madera County General Plan**

Agriculture and Natural Resources, Wetland and Riparian areas, Goal 5.D.5. & 5.D.7.

Specifically, these goals discuss identifying and conserving habitats and wildlife species associated with riparian areas and supporting management for groundwater recharge, nutrient catchment and wildlife habitats.

### **D) Madera County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan**

Chapter 9, Watershed Management

Specifically, this chapter discusses multiple methods of effective water management that encompass several areas that this planning project pertains to.

6. This planning project will not only have long term on-going media opportunities as restoration occurs but during the 10-month planning period there are additional opportunities in regard to educational outreach. As applicable milestones are reached the media will become aware of the positive educational model created. Having local youth in the field, learning directly about watershed issues, meadow restoration significance and climate change effects will attract media attention. Additionally, the triangular relationship between the BLRD, Coarsegold RCD and SNC will attract clout and hopefully more media, elected/agency official and the public's attention resulting in further educational outreach of all its listeners, readers and viewers alike. The Coarsegold RCD will develop press releases as seen fit and will invite the media on the field trips.

## **E. Project Management**

The Coarsegold RCD has been in existence since 1966. The District covers 534,380 acres in eastern Madera County, serving the communities of Bass Lake, Coarsegold, Oakhurst, O'Neals and North Fork and includes a portion of Yosemite National Park. A Volunteer Board meets monthly to provide effective project oversight and management. The Coarsegold RCD has an experienced volunteer treasurer/bookkeeper who effectively utilizes professional financial systems. Additionally the requested funding includes resources to pay for additional costs to assure the effective administration of this grant. Some grants obtained and administered by the Coarsegold RCD include:

- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$18,400.00  
Comparison of Brush Maintenance Alternatives  
Study of Fuel break methods, Example: goats, chemicals, mechanical, etc.
- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$25,256.00  
Conservation Occupations & Resource Education (CORE)  
(Work Program for local youth) Fuel and watershed work
- Forest Service/USDA Title II \$12,080.00, total cost of project \$27,630.00  
Noxious weed control in Eastern Madera County land owner/mapping project
- Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Project/Proposition 204 \$300,000.00  
State Water Resource control Board/Madera County Environmental Health  
Brushed, chipped, burned over 800 acres of private land, public land, etc to expand existing fuel breaks

The District has MOUs with a number of agencies that allow it to engage in effective, collaborative action.

(See [www.crcd.org](http://www.crcd.org).) Partners include:

The US Forest Service	Chowchilla Red Top RCD
The Bureau of Land Management	Department of Fish and Game
CA Dept. of Conservation	National Wild Turkey Federation
CA State USDA	Natural Resources Conservation Services

Current and past projects include:

- Demonstration of Rangeland Vegetated Buffers for Reducing NPS Pathogens, Nutrients, and Organic Carbon into the Tributaries of the Fresno and San Joaquin Rivers
- Numerous Fuel Break projects

- Kinsman Flat Habitat Improvement
- Willow Creek Community Fuel Reduction project
- Ahwahnee Fire Station Landscape Demonstration Project
- Outdoor classroom project on Fresno River (with BLM)
- Youth Workshops
- Community Fire Workshops
- Living among the Oaks Workshops

Additionally, our partnership with BLRD leverages our capacity on many levels. Having the appropriate scientist, potential federal funds and opportunity for other technical advice needed will enhance our success. The U.S. Forest Service has collectively more watershed analysis and restoration experience than any other federal or private entity. Moreover, the Forest Service does more NEPA planning than any other federal agency (47% nationally). As such, the Forest Service has the expertise, organizational capacity and resources to efficiently gather, manage, and analyze watershed data and complete the associated environmental planning. The Sierra National Forest has a diverse staff of resource scientists including hydrologists, soil scientists, geologists, fisheries biologists, wildlife biologists, botanists, archeologists, engineers, and NEPA planners to draw upon to complete both the technical and planning related work.

## 8. Detailed Budget Form

This is including within the evaluation criteria as required.

## 9. Performance Measures

In addition to the four required performance measures (if applicable) the Coarsegold RCD has established 2 other measures that help demonstrate the success of this planning grant. They are, the number of collaboratively developed plans and the number of organizations included in collaborative planning process.

Performance Measure – Proposed Planning Project	Data Collection Method and Sources	Target Values
Number of people reached	Outreach materials, presentation role call sheets	200
Dollar value of resources leveraged	Budget	N/A implementation funding total
New jobs created	Project report	1
New, improved or preserved economic activities	N/A this stage	0
Number of collaboratively developed plans	Completion of reports and analysis	2
Number of organizations included in collaborative planning process	Staff member to keep ongoing list of partner contributions and group involvement	10

## 10. Environmental Setting and Impacts:

The meadow restoration project areas occur throughout the Willow Creek watershed, located in the north-central part of the Sierra National Forest, just south of Yosemite National Park. Current land uses include varied recreational activities, fuels management projects, commercial hazard tree removal, livestock grazing, and watershed restoration projects. The watershed is home to several Forest Service sensitive and threatened and endangered species including Mountain Yellow Legged Frog, Yosemite toad, goshawks, spotted owls, Great Gray owls and the Pacific Fisher. Restoration projects concentrate on meadow and fen environments and will address a variety of systems components that will restore or enhance the ground water availability and storage capacity in meadow systems. Improved water storage capacity and availability will promote more robust and vigorous riparian-wetland vegetation development, which will make these systems both more physically resilient to floods and increase carbon sequestration. Climate change will likely bring about increased flood stressors as a result of more precipitation falling as rain and an increased frequency of rain-on-snow flooding. Restoration and physical repair and/or stabilization of meadows and stream channels will be essential to allow these systems to withstand and adapt to changes in the hydrologic regimes as a result of climate change. Cultural resources have been or will be evaluated through the National Environmental Policy Act analysis conducted by the U.S. Forest Service.

**15. Land Tenure:** N/A. All data gathering, field work and subsequent restoration would only occur on Federal property, for which the USDA Forest Service has tenure.

**16. Leases or Agreements:** N/A. The proposed activity is a planning project. No leases or formal agreements are required to initiate or implement the planning process.

**17. California environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** N/A. This planning project will be delivering both the NEPA/CEQA analysis.

**18. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance:** N/A. This planning project will be delivering both the NEPA/CEQA analysis therefore there is no compliance to begin this planning project.

**19. Regulatory Requirements/Permits:** N/A. the proposed activity is a planning project. No permits are required to initiate or implement the planning process.

**20. Non-profit exempt**

Coarsegold Resource Conservation District is a state agency. Therefore, articles of incorporation, bylaws and the tax exempt status letter are not required for this application.

**21. Demonstration of Support:** Please look at the attached letters of support (15)

**22. Executive Office Authorization Request Form:** N/A. This planning project does not qualify for this type of authorization.



**14. Photos of the Project Site:**





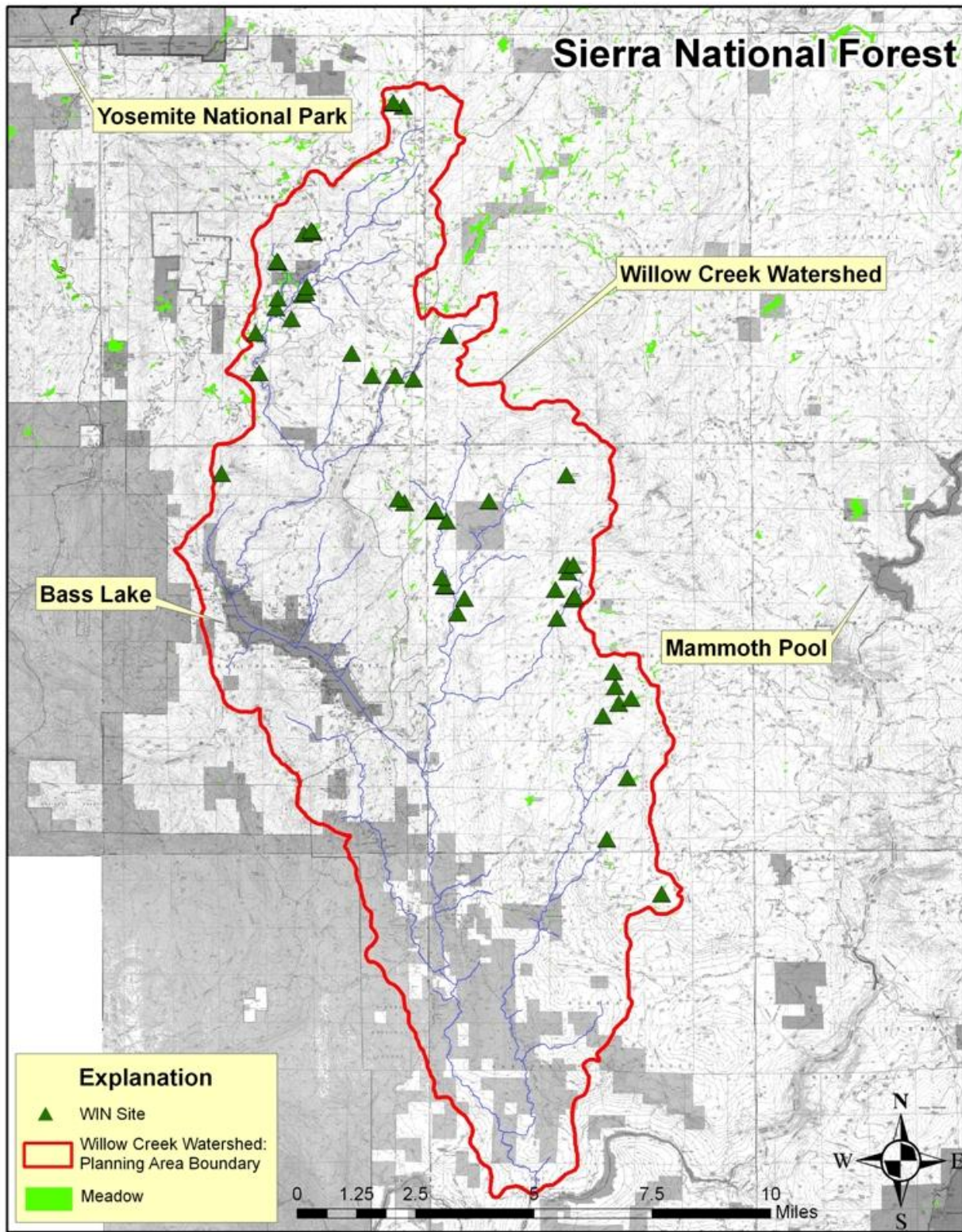


Detailed Budget Form					
State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b> Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Willow Creek Restoration Planning Project					
<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b> pre project planning					
SECTION ONE DIRECT COSTS	QTY	UNIT*	UNIT COST	SUBTOTAL	SNC Grant Request
<b>Staff/Personnel Expense - Project Related Wages/Benefits</b>					
GIS Specialist	8	day	\$243.00	\$1,944.00	\$1,360.80
Project manager/writer	22	day	\$331.00	\$7,282.00	\$5,097.40
Hydrology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Botanist	11	day	\$347.00	\$3,817.00	\$2,671.90
Botany crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Range	13	day	\$321.00	\$4,173.00	\$2,921.10
Archeologist	15	day	\$323.00	\$4,845.00	\$3,391.50
Archeology crew	32	day	\$260.00	\$8,320.00	\$5,824.00
Siviculture	12	day	\$243.00	\$2,916.00	\$2,041.20
Engineering	10	day	\$243.00	\$2,430.00	\$1,701.00
Soil	10	day	\$372.00	\$3,720.00	\$2,604.00
District Ranger	2	day	\$446.00	\$892.00	\$624.40
Wildlife Biologist	3	day	\$249.00	\$747.00	\$522.90
Fisheries	3	day	\$355.00	\$1,065.00	\$745.50
Hydrology/IDT leader	15	day	\$331.00	\$4,965.00	\$3,475.50
Recreation	5	day	\$260.00	\$1,300.00	\$910.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$65,056.00</b>	<b>\$45,539.20</b>
<b>Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related</b>					
Coarsegold RCD staff mileage	1200	mile	\$0.50	\$600.00	\$600.00
Field trips (driver, fuel, insurance etc)	400	mile	\$7.00	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,400.00</b>	<b>\$3,400.00</b>
<b>Contracts/Consultants - Project Related</b>					
Coarsegold RCD part time staff	150	hour	\$35.00	\$5,250.00	\$5,250.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$5,250.00</b>	<b>\$5,250.00</b>
<b>Materials/Supplies - Project Related</b>					

River Morphs Analysis Software				\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00
Educational outreach materials (prints, paper, cover boards, interactive worksheets)		Mis		\$300.00	\$300.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$2,600.00</b>	<b>\$2,600.00</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Fees - Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement</b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>DIRECT COSTS SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION TWO INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>SNC Grant Request</b>
Staff/Personnel Expense - Wages/Benefits/Consultants/Contract Labor					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Printed Materials - Project related Publications/Communications/Public Outreach					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Outreach/Education - Trainers fees/ facilitators/Facility Expense					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Equipment Use Expenses - Insurance/Registrations/Maintenance/Rental					
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Performance Measure reporting					
	0		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>OTHER TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MAINTENANCE SUBTOTAL:</b>				<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PROJECT TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$76,306.00</b>	<b>\$56,789.20</b>
<b>SECTION THREE</b>					
<b>Administrative Costs (Description - Not to exceed 15% of Project Total):</b>					
Coarsegold RCD	7	percent	\$56,789.20	\$3,975.25	\$3,975.25
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$3,975.25</b>	<b>\$3,975.25</b>
<b>SNC TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>					<b>\$60,764.45</b>
<b>Project Budget Details</b>					
<b>State of California - Sierra Nevada Conservancy</b>					
<b>APPLICANT NAME:</b>					
Coarsegold Resource Conservation District					
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>					
Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project					



<b>PROJECT TYPE (choose one):</b>					
Pre Project Planning					
<b>SECTION FOUR OTHER PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT*</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Status**</b>
List other funding or in-kind contributors to project					
BLRD Hydrologist/Project Manager	3	day	\$331.00	\$993.00	Obtained
BLRD GIS Special	2	day	\$243.00	\$486.00	Obtained
BLRD District Ranger	1	day	\$446.00	\$446.00	Obtained
BLRD printing	100	page	\$0.10	\$10.00	Obtained
Forester's Consulting	1	day	\$300.00	\$300.00	Obtained
Yosemite/Sequoia RC&D Resources (internet, phone, print)	0	mis	\$100.00	\$100.00	Obtained
BLRD staff overhead				\$19,516.80	if awarded
BLRD vehicle use	4	vehicle	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	if awarded
BLRD materials needed (probs,waders,BMI sample containers etc.)		mis		\$750.00	if awarded
Other partner billable hours unknown				\$0.00	if awarded
<b>Total Other Contributions:</b>				<b>\$24,601.80</b>	





RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF COARSEGOLD RESOURCES CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT APPLICATION TO THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY GRANT  
PROGRAM

DATED SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

Resolution 2010-1

Resolved by the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District, that the application be made to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to obtain the Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Grant, and to enter into an agreement to receive a grant for the "Willow Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Project". The Chairperson of the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District is hereby authorized and directed to prepare the necessary data, conduct investigations, file such application, and execute a grant agreement with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Passed and adopted at a meeting of the Coarsegold Resource Conservation District on August 26, 2010.

Authorized Original Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*R. E. Beck*  
*Ralph Ernest Beck*  
*Vice-President, CRCD*